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THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

GENERAL EDITORS FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

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THE SECOND BOOK

OF

SAMUEL

WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

EDITED BY

A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

MASTER OF SELWYN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;
LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

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suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

DEANERY, PETERBOROUGH.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible.* A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

I HAVE FOUND DAVID MY SERVANT
WITH MY HOLY OIL HAVE I ANOINTED HIM.

I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.

HE SHALL BE GREAT AND SHALL BE CALLED
THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH.
AND THE LORD GOD SHALL GIVE UNTO HIM
THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. *Titles and Division of the Books.* The two Books of Samuel, like the two Books of Kings, originally formed an undivided whole[1], and must be considered as one book for critical purposes in general introductory remarks. The Septuagint translators, regarding the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings as a complete History of the Kingdom from its foundation to its fall, divided the work into four books, which they styled *Books of the Kingdoms* (βίβλοι βασιλειῶν). Jerome followed this division in the Vulgate, altering the name to *Books of the Kings* (Libri Regum), which is retained as an alternative title in the English Bible. This division was first introduced into printed Hebrew Bibles by the Venice printer Bomberg in 1518.

2. *Meaning of the Title.* The title Samuel does not denote authorship, but like the titles Joshua, Ruth, and Esther, commemorates the prominent actor in the events recorded in the book. Its adoption shews a true insight into the connexion of the history it contains. It stands as a monument of the great-

[1] The Masoretic note of the number of verses, &c., appended at the close of the Second Book in the Hebrew Bible, still treats the two books as one. Origen (quoted by Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 25. 3) mentions that the Jews of his day regarded Samuel as one book.

ness of the Prophet who was Jehovah's instrument for establishing the Kingdom of Israel, and guiding the chosen people through a crisis in its history second in importance only to the Exodus. The book begins with the account of his birth: and his direct influence extends to the close of it, in the reign of the king whom he anointed as Jehovah's choice.

The Second Book of Samuel must seem a strange title for a book of which not a line was written by Samuel, and in which his name is not once mentioned, unless these two considerations are borne in mind, (1) that the division of the book into two parts is not original, (2) that Samuel's direct work really reaches all through the book.

3. *Who was the Author of the Book of Samuel?* To this question no answer can be given. A late Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship to Samuel himself. This obviously could only apply to the first twenty-four chapters of the First Book, and as the work forms a connected whole, it is improbable that these in their present form proceeded from his pen. It is generally agreed that the Book is *a compilation* from different sources, but who was the compiler there is no evidence to shew.

4. *What then were these sources?* Ingenious attempts have been made to analyse the component parts of the book. But apart from these conjectural theories we have several indications of the sources from which the compiler drew his materials.

(*a*) The chief sources were probably *contemporary prophetical histories*. The compiler of the Book of Chronicles (probably Ezra) expressly names as the original authority for the history of David's reign "the chronicle (lit. *words*) of Samuel the seer (*rôeh*) and the chronicle of Nathan the prophet, and the chronicle of Gad the seer (*chôzeh*)[1]." It has been maintained that Samuel, Nathan, and Gad were the subjects, not the authors, of the works referred to. Even if this was so, it is evident that they contained much valuable material for the history of David's reign. But the corresponding reference to the original authorities for the history of Solomon's reign in 2 Chron. ix. 29

[1] For the distinction between *rôeh* and *chôzeh* see note on 1 Sam. ix. 9.

(among which the chronicle of Nathan the prophet is again mentioned), and the constant references to similar prophetic writings as authorities for the reigns of later kings[1], make it almost certain that the three prophets mentioned were themselves the historians of the period.

It has been also maintained that the works referred to by the compiler of Chronicles actually were the present Book of Samuel. But it is evident that the document which he was using contained much more than these books, while at the same time certain sections of Samuel and Chronicles agree almost verbally. The most natural conclusion is that both compilers drew from the same authority, which the Chronicler expressly names. From this each felt at liberty to select such facts as bore upon the special object of his work[2].

If then the Book of Samuel was compiled largely from the chronicles of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, supplemented by other records preserved in the Schools of the Prophets, it follows that it rests upon the best possible authority. Samuel is the historian of his own life-time, which included the greater part of Saul's reign: Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign. The events of David's life must have been familiarly known in the Schools of the Prophets at Ramah. It is expressly mentioned that when he fled from Saul he "came and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him, and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth[3]," the college of prophets which Samuel had established at Ramah. To this intercourse may be referred the full and vivid account of David's friendship with Jonathan, preserved perhaps almost in the very words in which he related his story to the prophets.

An incidental notice suggests that Gad was the medium of communication between the college at Ramah and David during

[1] To the writings of Shemaiah and Iddo for the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15): to the commentary (*midrash*) of Iddo for that of Abijah (2 Chron. xiii. 22). Isaiah is expressly said to have written the history of Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). See also 2 Chron. xx. 34. xxxii. 32, xxxiii. 18, 19.

[2] See further in Ch. III. of this Introduction.

[3] 1 Sam. xix. 18.

his outlaw life[1]; both Gad[2] and Nathan[3] appear to have occupied official positions in David's court; and both appear as his monitors in important crises of his life[4]. To Nathan we probably owe the full history of David's sin and repentance, together with the series of calamities by which it was punished, which occupies so large a portion of the Second Book: to Gad may be due the account of the Numbering of the People and its consequences.

(*b*) *The chronicles of king David* (1 Chron. xxvii. 24), which appear from this allusion to have been of the nature of statistical state-records, may also have been consulted. From them may have been derived the formal summaries of wars such as are given in 2 Sam. viii. 1—15, and lists of officials such as those in 2 Sam. viii. 6—18, xx. 23—26, xxiii. 8—39.

(*c*) Express mention is made in 1 Sam. x. 25 of the fact that Samuel committed to writing *the charter of the kingdom*, and "laid it up before the LORD," possibly as an addition to the book of the Law.

(*d*) *The national poetic literature* was laid under contribution. From this were taken Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David's lament for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33, 34); David's thanksgiving (2 Sam. xxii. = Ps. xviii.); the last words of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7). Whether these were preserved in writing or by oral tradition is uncertain: of David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan it is expressly said that it was written in the "national anthology" known as the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18).

(*e*) *Oral tradition* may perhaps have supplied some particulars, though this must be a matter of conjecture.

5. *At what date was the compilation made?*

(*a*) The language points to an early date. It is pure Hebrew, free from Aramaisms[5] and late forms. Constructions which are common in the later books, *e.g.* Kings, are comparatively rare.

[1] 1 Sam. xxii. 5. [2] 2 Sam. xxiv. 11; 2 Chron. xxix. 25.
[3] 2 Sam. vii. 2 ff., xii. 25; 1 Kings i. 8 ff.
[4] 2 Sam. xii. 1 ff., xxiv. 11 ff.
[5] i.e. grammatical forms and words derived from Aramaic or Chaldee, a dialect akin to Hebrew, used in eastern Aram (Syria) and Babylonia. These are, generally speaking, found in later Hebrew.

(*b*) Some time however had elapsed since the events narrated in the book had occurred. The explanation of archaic terms (1 Sam. ix. 9) and reference to obsolete customs (2 Sam. xiii. 18), as well as the use of the formula "unto this day" (1 Sam. v. 5, vi. 18, xxvii. 6, xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3, vi. 8, xviii. 18) indicate this. Moreover "no grand survey of a period and selection of its events, such as is demanded from the historian, is generally possible until the period itself has retired in some degree into the background[1]."

(*c*) It must certainly have been after the death of David, since the whole length of his reign is mentioned (2 Sam. v. 5); and if the Septuagint text is correct, there are two allusions to events in the reign of Rehoboam. In 2 Sam. viii. 7 that version reads, "And Shishak king of Egypt took them when he came up against Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon:" and in 2 Sam. xiv. 27, "And she [Tamar] became the wife of Rehoboam the son of Solomon and bare him Abia."

(*d*) But even if these additions are not accepted as part of the original text, other indications point to a date not earlier than the reign of Rehoboam. The mention of "the kings of Judah" in 1 Sam. xxvii. 6 presupposes the separation of the kingdoms. The distinction between Judah and Israel in several passages[2] has been supposed to point to the same conclusion; but this cannot be pressed as evidence. The division which existed in the early part of David's reign was quite sufficient to account for it.

(*e*) On the other hand there is nothing in the book which points to a later date than this: and the conclusion may fairly be arrived at that the Book of Samuel was compiled substantially in its present form soon after the Division of the Kingdoms.

6. *The Canonicity of the book* has never been questioned. Its acceptance in the Christian Church rests upon the fact that it formed an integral part of those Jewish Scriptures, which were

[1] Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, I. 139.

[2] 1 Sam. xi. 8, xvii. 52, xviii. 16; 2 Sam. ii. 9, 10, iii. 10, v. 1—5, xix. 41—43, xx. 2.

received by our Lord and His Apostles as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Our Lord appealed to one of the narratives contained in it as teaching the great principle that the ceremonial law must give way to the law of mercy[1]: the Magnificat shews evident familiarity with the Song of Hannah: St Peter, St Stephen, and St Paul[2] refer to the history contained in it[3].

7. *The historical accuracy* of the book is remarkably borne out by the internal evidence. It is not to be denied that difficulties and discrepancies exist, which it is hard, perhaps impossible, to explain or reconcile. But the forcible simplicity and grace of the narrative; the vividness with which the actors in the various events stand out before us; the minuteness of detail with regard to time and circumstance; the accurate descriptions of places[4]; all agree to confirm the conclusion arrived at in § 4, that the greater part of the work is derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries, and in many cases handed down to us in their actual words. The apparent inconsistencies are in fact an evidence that the compiler faithfully embodied the authorities he consulted, instead of harmonizing them into what might have seemed a more consistent whole.

8. *The text of the book* presents some interesting problems. Our materials for determining the text are:

(*a*) *The Hebrew MSS.* most of which are not older than the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. They all present substantially the same text. Two points must be mentioned here in order to explain some of the notes. (1) Hebrew was originally written without vowels, except such long vowels as are repre-

[1] Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3, 4. Note the phrase, "Have ye not read," a regular formula of reference to the Scriptures.

[2] Acts iii. 24, vii. 46, xiii. 20—22.

[3] Add the references to 2 Sam. vii. 12—16 in Lk. i. 32, 33; Acts ii. 30; and to 2 Sam. vii. 14 in Heb. i. 5.

[4] Remarkably confirmed by the recent surveys of Palestine. See *e.g.* the notes on 1 Sam. xiv. 4, xvii. 3. In 2 Sam. the account of David's flight from Jerusalem (chaps. xv. 13—xvi. 14) is the best proof of the assertions made above.

sented by consonants. The present elaborate vowel system, stereotyping a traditional pronunciation and reading of the Old Testament, was not reduced to writing till about the seventh or eighth century A.D. (2) In some passages the traditional method of *reading* (Qrî) did not agree with the consonants of the *written text* (Kthîbh). In such cases the scribes did not alter the text, but appended a note giving the consonants to be read with the vowels shewn in the text.

(*b*) *The Versions.* Of these the oldest and most valuable is the Greek Version commonly called THE SEPTUAGINT (Sept. or LXX), or Version of the Seventy Elders, because it was long believed to have been made by seventy or seventy-two elders despatched from Jerusalem to Alexandria at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus. But the document on which the story with its embellishments rests is now known to be a forgery, and all that can be asserted about the origin of the Septuagint is that it was made (1) at Alexandria, (2) at different times and by different hands, (3) during the third and second centuries B.C., (4) before written vowel-points had been added to the text. The reference in Ecclus. xlvi. 19 to the Sept. version of 1 Sam. xii. 3 (see note there) proves that this part of the version was in existence before 150 B.C.

The two most important MSS. of the LXX containing the Book of Samuel are the Alexandrine MS. (denoted by the letter A) written in the fifth century, and now preserved in the British Museum; and the Vatican MS. (denoted by the letter B) assigned to the fourth century, and preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome. The text of the former in the Book of Samuel has been corrected for the most part to agree with the existing Hebrew text: that of the latter differs considerably from it, and although disfigured by mistakes, glosses, marginal notes inserted in the text by ignorant scribes, and similar defects, appears to preserve evidence for an original text older and in some places more correct than the existing Hebrew recension[1].

[1] The most striking variations of the LXX. from the Hebrew text in 2 Samuel will be found in the notes on ch. iv. 6, viii. 7, xiv. 27, xvii. 3.

That the Hebrew text of Samuel is by no means free from errors is clear from internal considerations and from a comparison of the passages which exist in duplicate elsewhere[1]. The principal readings in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew are mentioned in the notes, partly with a view to the criticism of the text, partly to exhibit the form of the text which was current in a great part of the Christian Church for many centuries after its first foundation.

This Version, with all its defects, must be of the greatest interest: (1) as preserving evidence for the text far more ancient than the oldest Hebrew MSS.: (2) as the means by which the Greek language was wedded to Hebrew thought, and the way prepared for the New Testament: (3) because it is the source of the great majority of the quotations made from the O. T. by the writers of the N. T.: (4) because it was the version in which the O. T. was studied by the fathers of the Eastern Church, and indirectly by those of the Western, until Jerome's new translation (the Vulgate) superseded the Old Latin versions made from the Septuagint.

Next to the Septuagint must be mentioned the Chaldee or Aramaic Version known as the TARGUM[2] OF JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL. This was probably not reduced to writing before the middle of the fourth century A.D., though based on much earlier oral translations. It is for the most part an accurate version; but in some passages it becomes a loose paraphrase, interspersed with comment, illustration, and fragments of Jewish tradition. A translation of the Targum of David's Last Words is given in Additional Note IV., p. 237, as an example of this style of paraphrase.

Second in importance only to the LXX. is the VULGATE (*Versio vulgata*) or Latin Version made by ST JEROME (Hieronymus) directly from the Hebrew. This great work was commenced by him about the year A.D. 389, when he was already

[1] See note 2 on p. 22 for a list of the passages which are common to Samuel and Chronicles; and for a discussion of the texts of ch. xxii. and Ps. xviii. see Additional Note III., p. 235.

[2] *Targum* signifies *interpretation* or *translation*.

sixty years of age, and took fourteen years to complete. The Books of Samuel and Kings were the part first issued. It is a valuable evidence for the state of the Hebrew text in the fourth century, and proves that that text has suffered comparatively little change since. Many of the variations found in the editions of the Vulgate are really interpolations from the Old Latin Version, which as mentioned above was made from the LXX. Jerome's work "remained for eight centuries the bulwark of Western Christianity; and as a monument of ancient linguistic power the translation of the O. T. stands unrivalled and unique."

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

PART I.

THE REIGN OF DAVID OVER JUDAH: I.—IV.

Section 1. *David's behaviour on hearing of Saul's death.*

(1) Tidings of Saul's death brought to David.....i. 1—16.
(2) David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan ...i. 17—27.

Section 2. *The rival kingdoms.*

(1) David anointed king of Judah .....ii. 1—4.
(2) His message to the men of Jabesh .....ii. 5—7.
(3) Ish-bosheth made king of Israel by Abner ...ii. 8—11.
(4) The civil war.
  (*a*) The combat at Gibeon.....ii. 12—17.
  (*b*) The death of Asahel .....ii. 18—23.
  (*c*) The pursuit .....ii. 24—31.
  (*d*) Asahel's burial .....ii. 32.
  (*e*) Progress of David's cause.....iii. 1.
  (*f*) His family .....iii. 2—5.

Section 3. *Events leading to David's elevation to the throne of Israel.*

(1) Quarrel between Abner and Ish-bosheth .....iii. 6—11.
(2) Abner's overtures to David .....iii. 12—21.
Michal restored to David.
(3) Abner murdered by Joab .....iii. 22—27.
(4) David's indignation .....iii. 28—30.
(5) His lamentation for Abner .....iii. 31—39.
(6) Murder of Ish-bosheth .....iv. 1—7.
(7) Execution of the murderers.....iv. 8—12.

Note (*a*) David's generosity to enemies: (*b*) his patience, and willingness to wait God's time for his elevation: (*c*) continuous rise of David's power and declension of Saul's house: (*d*) disappointment of Abner's ambitious schemes.

PART II.

The Reign of David over all Israel: v.—xxiv.

Division I. **Rise of David's power.**

Section 1. *The Foundation of David's Kingdom at Jerusalem.*

(1) His election and anointing .....v. 1—5.
(2) Jebus captured and made the capital.....v. 6—12.
Alliance with Tyre.
(3) David's family .....v. 13—16.
(4) Philistine opposition overcome .....v. 17—25.
(5) David's care for religion.
(*a*) Removal of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim .....vi. 1—5.
(*b*) Uzzah's death .....vi. 6—11.
(*c*) Removal of the Ark to Jerusalem .....vi. 12—19.
(*d*) Michal rebuked .....vi. 20—23.

Section 2. *The Promise of eternal Dominion to the house of David.*

(1) David's desire to build a temple .....vii. 1—3.
(2) The Lord's answer through Nathan .....vii. 4—17.
(3) David's prayer and thanksgiving .....vii. 18—29.

Section 3. *The Extension of David's Kingdom.*

(1) Foreign conquests.

(*a*) Philistines and Moabites .....viii. 1, 2.
(*b*) Zobah and Damascus .....viii. 3—8.
(*c*) Submission of Hamath.....viii. 9—12.
(*d*) Edom .....viii. 13, 14.

(2) Internal administration.
David's officers of state .....viii. 15—18.

(3) David's kindness to Mephibosheth .....ix. 1—13.

Note (*a*) the silence of the narrative about details of conquest and national progress: (*b*) David's zeal for religion: (*c*) the almost unbroken prosperity of this period.

DIVISION II. **David's Fall and its Punishment: x.—xx.**

Section 1. *The preliminary circumstances.*

(1) David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites .....x. 1—5.
(2) First campaign. Defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies .....x. 6—14.
(3) Second campaign. Total defeat of the Syrians .....x. 15—19.
(4) Third campaign. Siege of Rabbah .....xi. 1.

Note (*a*) a full account of these wars is introduced because of their connexion with David's sin: (*b*) rapid growth of David's power implied by such extensive wars.

Section 2. *David's Fall.*

(1) David's adultery with Bath-sheba .....xi. 2—5.
(2) Uriah summoned to Jerusalem .....xi. 6—13.
(3) David's letter to Joab. Uriah's death .....xi. 14—17.
(4) The news brought to David .....xi. 18—25.
(5) Marriage of David and Bath-sheba ....xi. 26, 27.

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(2) The King rebuked .....xii. 7—14.
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(5) Capture of Rabbah .....xii. 26—31.

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(3) Recall of Absalom.
  (*a*) Joab's stratagem .....xiv. 1—20.
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  (*c*) His person and family .....xiv. 25—27.
  (*d*) His readmission to the king's presence xiv. 28—33.

Section 5. *Absalom's Rebellion and David's Flight.*

(1) Absalom's preparations .....xv. 1—6.
(2) Outbreak of the rebellion .....xv. 7—12.
(3) David's Flight .....xv. 13—18.
(4) Incidents of the Flight.
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  (*b*) The priests and the Ark .....xv. 24—29.
  (*c*) Hushai's commission .....xv. 30—37.
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  (*e*) Shimei's cursing .....xvi. 5—14.
(5) Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem .....xvi. 15—19.
(6) Events at Jerusalem.
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  (*b*) Hushai's counsel .....xvii. 1—14.
  (*c*) Hushai's message to David .....xvii. 15—22.
  (*d*) Ahithophel's suicide .....xvii. 23.
(7) The Civil War.
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  (*b*) Reception of David at Mahanaim .....xvii. 27—29.
  (*c*) The battle .....xviii. 1—8.
  (*d*) The death of Absalom .....xviii. 9—18.
  (*e*) The news brought to David. His grief. xviii. 19—33.

Section 6. *Restoration of David's authority.*

(1) David reproved by Joab .....xix. 1—8.
(2) Negotiations for the king's recall .....xix. 9—15.
(3) David's return. Incidents on the journey.
  (*a*) Shimei pardoned .....xix. 16—23.
  (*b*) Meeting with Mephibosheth .....xix. 24—30.
  (*c*) Barzillai's farewell .....xix. 31—40.
(4) Dispute between Judah and Israel .....xix. 41—43.

(5) Sheba's insurrection.
  (*a*) The outbreak .....xx. 1, 2.
    David's arrival at Jerusalem .....xx. 3.
  (*b*) Pursuit of Sheba. Amasa murdered by Joab .....xx. 4—13.
  (*c*) Siege of Abel Beth-Maachah. End of the insurrection .....xx. 14—22.
(6) Officers of state after the restoration .....xx. 23—26.

Note (*a*) how large a portion of the book is devoted to tracing the punishment of David's sin: (*b*) the graphic detail in the narrative of Absalom's rebellion: (*c*) David's resignation: (*d*) the ominous discord between Judah and Israel.

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(2) Burial of the bones of Saul and his sons .....xxi. 11—14.

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(3) The plague .....xxiv. 15—17.
(4) Purchase of Araunah's threshing-floor and erection of an altar .....xxiv. 18—25.

This appendix forms a general supplement to the history of David's reign, illustrating (*a*) God's providential discipline of Israel, by two national punishments: (*b*) David's character, by two of his own writings: (*c*) the heroic spirit of the age, by the catalogue of his mighty men, and examples of their valorous exploits.

CHAPTER III.

THE RELATION OF THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES TO THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. The First Book of the Chronicles contains another history of David's reign. Many passages are word for word the same as the corresponding passages in the Book of Samuel[1]; and many passages agree in substance, though differing more or less in detail[2]. But much that is contained in Samuel is omitted in Chronicles, and much of the information in Chronicles is supplementary to the narrative of Samuel. Neither book is a complete history of David's reign . each compiler *selected* from the materials before him such portions as suited his purpose. It is important therefore to endeavour to ascertain the principle of the selection. With this object let us examine the facts.

2. *Omissions in Chronicles.* The following are the most important matters contained in Samuel and omitted in Chronicles :

[1] This verbal coincidence is frequently obscured in the E.V. by different renderings of the same original. This may be partly due to the fact that the books of Samuel and Chronicles fell to the lot of different companies of translators (see Dr Westcott's *History of the English Bible*, p. 147 ff.); but unfortunately the false principle of introducing variety by different renderings of the same words was deliberately adopted by the translators of 1611.

[2] The parallel sections are as follows:

1 Chr.	x. 1—12	= 1 Sam.	xxxi.
,,	xi. 1—9	= 2 Sam.	v. 1—3, 6—10.
,,	xi. 10—41	= ,,	xxiii. 8—39.
,,	xiii.	= ,,	vi. 1—11.
,,	xiv.	= ,,	v. 11—25.
,,	xv., xvi. (in part only)	= ,,	vi. 12—23.
,,	xvii., xviii., xix.	= ,,	vii., viii., x.
,,	xx. 1—3	= ,,	xi. 1, xii. 26—31.
,,	xx. 4—8	= ,,	xxi. 18—22.
,,	xxi.	= ,,	xxiv.

(*a*) The history of David's reign at Hebron and the civil war with the house of Saul (2 Sam. i—iv.).

(*b*) David's kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix.).

(*c*) David's adultery and its punishment, including the history of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. xi. 2—27, xii. 1—25, xiii.—xx.).

(*d*) The execution of Saul's sons (2 Sam. xxi. 1—14).

(*e*) David's Thanksgiving and Last Words (2 Sam. xxii., xxiii. 1—7).

3. *Additions in Chronicles.* The following are the most striking additions in Chronicles to the history contained in Samuel:

(*a*) The catalogues of the warriors who joined David at Ziklag, and of those who came to Hebron to make him king (1 Chr. xii.).

(*b*) Elaborate details of the arrangements on the occasion of the translation of the Ark to Jerusalem (1 Chr. xiii. 1—5, xv., xvi.).

(*c*) Many details in the account of the Plague (1 Chr. xxi.).

(*d*) David's preparations for the building of the Temple (1 Chr. xxii.).

(*e*) The organization of the Priests and Levites, the army, and the civil service (1 Chr. xxiii.—xxvii.).

(*f*) The assembly of the people at Solomon's accession (1 Chr. xxviii.. xxix.).

4. In general then the compiler of the Book of Samuel gives a history of David's reign with special reference (*a*) to the vicissitudes through which he was raised by the care and guidance of Jehovah to be the head of a mighty kingdom: (*b*) to matters of, comparatively speaking, private interest in his life: (*c*) to the chastisements by which he was punished for his sin. He thus portrays David the man as well as David the King.

The compiler of Chronicles gives prominence (*a*) to all matters of religious ceremonial, calling special attention to the agency of the Priests and Levites[1]: (*b*) to the chief steps in the rise and

[1] The Levites are only mentioned twice in Samuel (1 Sam. vi. 15; 2 Sam. xv. 24), and above thirty times in 1 Chron. alone.

progress of David's kingdom, omitting the reverses which from time to time checked its growth.

5. These differences correspond remarkably to the age and object of the two historians. The unknown compiler of Samuel was undoubtedly *a prophet*, and his narrative is penetrated by a prophetic spirit[1]. He drew up, no long time after the events, a narrative of the foundation of the Theocratic Monarchy, selecting such matter as illustrated God's providential dealings with the king He had chosen.

6. The Book of Chronicles was written after the Return from the Captivity. Its author was most probably Ezra, who was *a priest*, and his main objects in compiling it were (*a*) to publish trustworthy genealogical records with a view to the re-settlement of the land, and the re-establishment of regular services in the restored temple; (*b*) to rekindle something of national life and spirit, and make the people feel that they were still the representatives of the Kingdom of God, and that national prosperity depended upon faithfulness to Jehovah. With this design he drew up a compendious history, tracing the fortunes of the kingdom of David from its foundation, and selecting especially such passages of the history as present the best kings engaged in promoting the cause of religion, and regulating the services of the house of God; and moreover laying particular stress upon the direct intervention of God for the reward of righteousness and the punishment of evil-doing. Its purpose is *didactic* rather than *historical*, and its tone, in accordance with the profession of its author, *priestly* rather than *prophetic*.

7. Hence the prominence given to religious ceremonial and Levitical and priestly work in the history of David's reign: hence the silence with which the darker episodes of that reign are passed over. The historian must not be accused of unfaithfulness, or inaccuracy, or prejudice, for adopting such a method of treatment; his history does not profess to be complete,

[1] Note for example the use of the title "LORD of Hosts," found thirteen times in Samuel, but only thrice in 1 Chron., and then in passages copied from Samuel. See Additional Note I. to 1 Sam. p. 235.

and his selection of facts is justified by the special purpose which he has in view.

Such a review of its past history was well calculated to quicken the energies of the nation for the new era of its existence upon which it was entering ; and to us the preservation of the work is most valuable, presenting as it does another side of the national life, and adding in no small degree (so far as concerns the period covered by the Second Book of Samuel) to the completeness and truthfulness of the picture which we can draw of David's reign, and the lessons which we can derive from it.

8. It remains to inquire whether the matter common to Chronicles and Samuel was taken from the latter book, or derived from the original authorities used by the compiler of Samuel. The verbal agreement of some sections favours the first supposition; but the original authorities for the history of David's reign were still extant, and are referred to for fuller information ; and while it seems probable that the compiler of Chronicles had the Book of Samuel before him, it is clear that he also drew largely from other sources to which he had access, in all probability the state records and the prophetical histories which he mentions by name[1].

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. The chronology of the Second Book of Samuel is practically the chronology of David's reign. Unfortunately the historian has arranged his work according to the subject-matter rather than the sequence of events, and the definite marks of time are few and unconnected.

2. The subjoined table is offered as a conjectural arrange-

[1] The Chronicles of King David (1 Chr. xxvii. 24) and the Chronicles of Samuel. Nathan, and Gad (1 Chr. xxix. 29). See Introd. Ch. I. § 4.

ment of the principal events in David's reign, but the dates must be distinctly understood to be only approximate. The year of David's accession may be fixed at about B.C. 1055.

Reign of David at Hebron (2 Sam. ii. 11)	1055—1048
Absalom's birth	(?) 1052 or 1050
Reign of Ish-bosheth and civil war (2 Sam. ii. 10)	1050—1048
Reign of David at Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 4, 5)	1048—1015
Period of foreign wars (2 Sam. viii.)	1045—1035
in which are to be placed	
A period of peace (2 Sam. vii. 1),	
Mephibosheth's elevation[1],	
The famine[2] (?).	
Adultery with Bath-sheba	1035
Amnon's outrage	1034
Absalom's rebellion	1023
Period of tranquillity and steady national growth[3]	1023—1015
The plague	(?) 1018
David's death	1015

3. This table is based upon the following considerations:

(*a*) Solomon was young at his accession[4], according to Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 7, 8), only fourteen. The natural inference from 1 Chr. iii. 5, where he is placed last of Bath-sheba's four sons, is that he was the youngest of her children, if not of all David's sons[5]. David's adultery with Bath-sheba may therefore be placed about twenty years before the close of his reign.

(*b*) Between Amnon's outrage and Absalom's rebellion about eleven years intervened. Two years passed before Absalom's revenge (2 Sam. xiii. 23); three years were spent by Absalom at Geshur (ch. xiii. 38); two more at Jerusalem before he was admitted to David's presence (ch. xiv. 28); and four[6] in plotting for his conspiracy (ch. xv. 7). Absalom's rebellion cannot be

[1] See preliminary note to ch. ix.
[2] See note on ch. xxi. 1.
[3] See Introd. Ch. VI. § 11, p. 37.
[4] 1 Chr. xxii. 5; 1 Kings ii. 2, iii. 7.
[5] This is distinctly stated by Josephus, *Ant.* VII. 14. 2. It is true that a different impression is left by 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25; but Hebrew history not seldom passes over a long interval in silence without a hint of the intervening events. See a striking example of this in 1 Chr. xi. 1, where the whole of David's reign at Hebron is thus passed over.
[6] Reading *four* instead of *forty* in ch. xv. 7. See note there.

placed much less than ten years before the close of David's reign, for the kingdom had recovered from the shock, and was in such a condition of prosperity and tranquillity during several years, that David was tempted by the spirit of pride which induced him to take the census, and could make extensive preparations for building the Temple. Nor can it well be placed much earlier, for Absalom was born at Hebron (2 Sam. iii. 3), and he can hardly have been less than eighteen or twenty when he killed Amnon.

(*c*) If this calculation is approximately correct, Amnon's outrage occurred shortly after David's adultery, and the son's indulgence of his passions was encouraged by the evil example of his father's still recent crime. Thus David's punishment sprang immediately out of his offence, for Amnon's act was the seed of a long series of calamities.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLACE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL IN THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1. The Old Testament differs from ordinary histories (1) in its *subject*, because it is the history of the special training and discipline of God's chosen people: (2) in its *method*, because it is "a history of facts as God sees them referred to their true centre in Him, explained by His dealings with men, and His workings within them[1]:" or, in other words, its writers were inspired by God the Holy Ghost to discern the true significance of events, and to relate such parts of the national history as should truly set forth the gradual evolution of God's purpose towards His people[2].

[1] Barry's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 45.

[2] According to the Jewish arrangement the books of the Old Testament are divided into three classes: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, a division which is already recognised in the words of the

2. The Old Testament is the history of a dispensation which was partial, progressive, preparatory. It can only be rightly understood in view of the great fact to which it looked forward. It must be studied as the record of the Divine Preparation for the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is the central event of the world's history, the hope of all humanity, the final revelation of God to the world[1]. "It does not simply *contain* prophecies of Christ: it *is* from first to last a prophecy of Him."

3. This preparation included three main elements which must be carefully traced in each successive epoch of Jewish history: (i) the discipline and training of the chosen nation of Israel that it might be "the home[2]" to which in "the fulness of the times" God might send His Son[3]; and the instrument by which the knowledge of God might be communicated to the world at large[4]: (ii) the gradual development under the various types of Priest, Prophet, and King, of the expectation of a Deliverer who should unite in himself all these offices, and be at once a Mediator, a Teacher, a Monarch: (iii) God's progressive revelation of Himself, "in many parts and in many fashions[5]," that men might at length be enabled to recognise "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ[6]."

We must examine how the period of which the history is contained in this book contributed to the preparation in each of these respects.

4. (i) The Book of Samuel is the record of a most critical epoch in the training of the nation of Israel. To understand its significance a brief survey of their whole history is necessary.

Three great periods must be distinguished in the history of

prologue to Ecclesiasticus (about B.C. 130), "the law, and the prophets, and the rest of the books," and in Lk. xxiv. 44, "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms." It should be remembered that the so-called "historical books" of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings belong to the second group, and are entitled "The Former Prophets." True history is prophecy.

[1] There is a most suggestive sketch of the Preparation for Christianity in ch. I. of Prof. Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*.

[2] John i. 11, εἰς τὰ ἴδια. [3] Gal. iv. 4.

[4] John iv. 22. [5] Heb. i. 1. [6] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Israel; the Theocracy, the Monarchy, the Hierarchy; corresponding in some degree to the three divisions of the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets, the Writings.

(*a*) *The Theocracy.* The history of the Jewish nation begins with Abraham, the friend of God, the father of the faithful, "the ancestor of all nations which have held a monotheistic belief practically." With him and with his family was made the first covenant of promise. In Egypt the family became a nation. The stern discipline of toil and suffering in the presence of their common enemy bound them together. The great signs and wonders of the Exodus declared their high destiny. At Sinai the covenant made with their forefathers was renewed, confirmed, and amplified to the nation. The Law was given as a schoolmaster for the childhood of the new-born nation, "a kind of external conscience" to train it to obedience. The Israelites entered Canaan, and the first part of the promise to Abraham was fulfilled.

But for a long time the nation seemed to make no progress. The period which intervened between the Entry into Canaan and the Life of Samuel was a time of anarchy and apostasy. The Book of Judges is a record of two centuries of national disintegration and religious declension. It was necessary, humanly speaking, in order that they might learn their weakness. They were unable as yet to bear the pure Theocracy, the direct government of God without the intervention of an earthly ruler. Some visible bond must be found to unite into a solid mass the scattered tribes which could not as yet be firmly bound together into one by the invisible tie of a common allegiance to Jehovah. Material and political means must prepare the way for the spiritual and religious end. Otherwise the nation must cease to exist, ground to pieces between the enemies which surrounded it on all sides. In order to make solid advance, retrogression was inevitable.

At this critical juncture God raised up Samuel, "a prophet second only to Moses," to guide the nation through this crisis in its existence, and effect the transition to the second stage of its education.

(*b*) *The Monarchy.* The sovereignty of a visible monarch was a declension from the ideal of the Theocracy. Yet a king might have been given by God in His own time as a necessary factor in the training of the nation. But the demand for a king, as made by the Israelites at this period, was the direct outcome of faithlessness. It was a defection from God. Nevertheless the request was granted. God first gave them a king according to their own ideal, that bitter experience might teach them lessons they would not otherwise learn: and then a king "after His own heart," a true representative of the Kingdom of God. In his hands such a monarchy as we may conceive might have been asked for without sin, fulfilled important purposes by consolidating the scattered tribes into a body strong enough to maintain its independence, thus saving the nation from destruction, and preserving it to fulfil its great destiny of blessing to the world.

(*c*) *The Hierarchy* at length took the place of the Monarchy and resumed the ideal of Theocracy. When the Kingdom fell, and the discipline of the Captivity had done its work, "the unity of a Church succeeded to the unity of a nation." The voice of prophecy ceased. In the absence of new revelations, the people pondered on the past, till at length "the time was fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God came."

5. (ii) In what respects did the period we have to study contribute to the formation and development of the Messianic expectation? The Law with its elaborate ritual of sacrifice had pointed forward to One who should be at once Priest and Victim, and make atonement for the sin of man. Now the Kingdom turned the national thoughts to the hope of a King who should reign in righteousness, and "have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth[1]." The kingdom of David and Solomon was a type of the kingdom of that Son of David to whom in the fulness of time was given in a spiritual reality the throne of His father David[2]. It is in

[1] Ps. lxxii. 7, 8. Psalms ii., xlv., lxxii., cx. should be studied as illustrating the growth of the Messianic Hope in connexion with the Kingdom.

[2] Lk. i. 32, 33.

the Book of Samuel that the title of Messiah, the LORD'S Anointed, the Christ, is first applied to the king[1], whose visible majesty kindled prophetic hopes of a glorious future[2].

6. (iii) It remains to inquire how God's revelation of Himself was carried forward in this period.

(*a*) One result of the establishment of the kingdom was the building of the Temple. As the king was the visible representative of the Divine government, so the centralised sanctuary testified to the unity of Him whom Israel worshipped, and both combined to present spiritual ideas in a fixed and definite shape. Monotheism was not, as has sometimes been wrongly said, an instinct of the Semitic races. The repeated idolatries of the Jewish nation prove the contrary. Only through long discipline and with constant relapses was the lesson learnt. The period of the Monarchy taught this truth in a visible and material manner, and when once learnt it was afterwards spiritualised by the destruction of the visible Monarchy and the discipline of the Captivity.

(*b*) Closely connected with the establishment of the Monarchy was the institution of the Prophetic Order. This was Samuel's second great legacy to his nation. By the agency of the prophets the Will of Jehovah was made known to men; new revelations of His character and His claims were communicated; the spiritual meaning of the Law was interpreted[3].

(*c*) In this period was deepened the consciousness of the individual's personal relation to God. The intimate communing with Him in prayer and praise, which is characteristic of the Psalms of David, marks a new advance in the relation of man to God. Now was laid the foundation of that Psalter in which for all succeeding time, men have found the expression and the echo of their deepest thoughts and highest aspirations.

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 10, where the Septuagint has χριστός. The same word in both Heb. and LXX. is applied to the *high-priest* in Lev. iv. 5, 16, vi. 22.

[2] The typical character of David's reign and life is discussed in Ch. VII. of this *Introduction*. See also Additional Note 1., p. 233.

[3] See Introd. to 1 Samuel, ch. vi.

7. To sum up briefly, the Monarchy preserved the existence of the nation, foreshadowed the kingdom of the Messiah, witnessed to the government of God. At the same time Prophecy and Psalmody interpreted the past, spiritualised the present, stimulated hope for the future.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

1. The First Book of Samuel brings the history of David's life down to the close of that period of preparatory discipline by which he was divinely educated for his high destiny[1]. The quiet life in the home at Bethlehem, the novel duties and temptations of Saul's court, the manifold hardships and perils of exile, had done their work, and moulded the lines of that many-sided character with an ineffaceable impress. As shepherd he had acquired the spirit of calm thought and deep reflexion; as courtier he had been trained in prudent self-control and chivalrous generosity; as outlaw he had learned quick sympathy with the oppressed, knowledge of men, and power of government; and above all, each successive phase of experience had quickened and developed that conscious dependence upon God which was the fundamental secret of his strength throughout his life. Step by step he had been led forward, steadily refusing to take the shaping of his career into his own hands by deeds of violence[2], and "committing his way unto the LORD," in the full assurance that "He would bring it to pass[3]."

2. The Second Book of Samuel contains the history of David's reign. When the discipline of his early life was complete, the death of Saul opened his way to the throne. The task before him was immense. Internal disorganization consequent upon the misrule of Saul's later years: the jealousy of the

[1] See Introd. to 1 Samuel, chap. viii.
[2] 1 Sam. xxvi. 10.
[3] Ps. xxxvii. 5.

partisans of the old dynasty: the antagonism of conflicting interests among the different tribes; a country overrun with victorious and powerful enemies; the certain prospect that any vigorous attempt to consolidate the kingdom would excite the hostility of foreign enemies—these were some of the difficulties which met him at the outset. And if these obstacles were successfully overcome, and he became the acknowledged sovereign of a united and powerful nation, the trial to his own character could not fail to be severe. Would he continue to be, as the essential nature of the Theocratic Monarchy demanded that he should be, the faithful "servant of Jehovah," the obedient instrument of His Will; or would he, like Saul, assume an attitude of autocratic independence, and fall by the sin of pride and self-reliance?

3. From such difficulties a weaker man might well have shrunk. But David was a born ruler of men. In his well-knit, sinewy frame, insensible to hardship, incapable of fatigue, he possessed the indispensable pre-requisite for a warrior-king[1]: but higher qualifications than these were the innate aptitude for governing which was early displayed in his control of the wild spirits who gathered round him in his outlaw life; the fearless courage which had characterised him from his earliest days[2]; and the singular power which he possessed of inspiring enthusiastic devotion in his followers[3]: and the highest qualification of all was his firm trust and unshaken dependence upon God, coupled with the consciousness of a divine commission, which led him in each crisis to "wait patiently upon God," in the confident expectation of divine guidance[4].

4. There are two clearly marked periods in the history of David's reign. During the first he reigned over Judah in Hebron, and during the second over all Israel in Jerusalem. His reign over Israel in Jerusalem is no less clearly divided

[1] Observe how he regards this as the gift of God and gives thanks for it accordingly in 2 Sam. xxii. 34 ff.
[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 34.
[3] 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 16; 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 ff.
[4] See Ewald's *Hist. of Israel*, III. 60.

into two periods in the view of the sacred historian, by the great sin which cast its fatal shadow over the later years of his life.

But the author of Samuel does not aim at giving a complete or chronological history of David's reign. Considerable portions of it, and many events of interest and importance, are passed over in silence, or with the barest passing reference.

5. (i) *David's reign at Hebron.* The first five out of the seven and a half years during which David was king of Judah only are almost a blank in the history. Northern Palestine was occupied by the Philistines after the battle of Gilboa: the adherents of Saul's house established themselves in the Trans-Jordanic provinces: David quietly devoted himself to consolidating his little kingdom of Judah. His family grew, and some intercourse with foreign countries is indicated by his matrimonial alliance with the daughter of a petty Syrian king, Talmai of Geshur. It was not until Abner had succeeded in repulsing the Philistines, and re-organizing the disintegrated northern tribes, and had placed Ish-bosheth on the throne of Israel, that the two kingdoms came into collision. For two years a desultory civil war was waged, until at length the defection of Abner destroyed the last hopes of the house of Saul. His treacherous murder by Joab delayed the transference of the kingdom of Israel to David for a brief space only. Ish-bosheth's assassination shortly after removed the remaining excuse which the northern tribes had for holding aloof from David. There was one man, and one only, who was capable of saving the nation in this crisis. The representatives of all Israel came to Hebron and unanimously offered the crown to him who had been designated twenty years before as the King of Jehovah's choice, and in all the vicissitudes of those twenty years had proved his worthiness for that position. A national assembly was held with general rejoicings, David was anointed for the third time, and a solemn covenant concluded between him and his subjects.

6. (ii) *David's reign at Jerusalem,* (a) *before his fall.* The first important undertaking of the new king was the capture of

Jebus. Here he fixed his capital, and hither, as soon as circumstances permitted, he transferred the Ark. Jerusalem thus became the sanctuary as well as the capital of the kingdom. This union of the political and religious centres inaugurated a new epoch in the nation's history. It was a visible realisation of the true principle of the Theocratic Monarchy. The day on which he welcomed the Ark into Zion, his own city, as a very Advent of Jehovah to dwell in the midst of His people, was the greatest day of David's life. From that day dates the beginning of the sanctity of "the Holy City," round which so many sacred associations cluster, and which has become the earthly type of heaven.

7. In this first period of his reign are most probably to be placed the great foreign wars by which he established his dominion on a secure basis. Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Edomites, Syrians up to the very banks of the Euphrates, submitted to his irresistible advance. The powerful kingdom of Tyre became his ally: Hamath voluntarily placed itself under his protectorate. It was no lust for conquest which led him into these wars: they were forced upon him by the necessities of his position in the struggle for national existence. No nation between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates could acquiesce in Israel's rapidly increasing power without some attempt to crush so dangerous a rival.

8. One brief interval of complete peace during this period allowed him to turn his attention to the cherished wish of his life, the plan of building a worthy Temple for Jehovah. Though he was not permitted to carry it out himself, he received a rich compensation in the marvellous prophecy of Nathan, by which an eternal dominion was promised to his house, and an assurance given that his own son should carry out the plan for which the fitting time had not yet fully come.

9. With the exception of the first failure to bring up the Ark to Jerusalem, and some temporary reverses in the field of battle[1], only one great calamity, so far as we know, interrupted the rapid

[1] Ps. lx., title. See note on ch. viii. 13.

advance of prosperity during this period. Three years of famine, the punishment of Saul's breach of faith with the Gibeonites, taught Israel to reverence the sanctity of national oaths and treaties.

10. (β) *David's reign after his fall.* The second period of David's reign at Jerusalem opens with his great sin. From that sin dates the commencement of the great troubles of his life. The nation indeed does not seem to have suffered in its relations with foreign powers; but a series of calamities, partly involving the whole nation, partly affecting his own family only, embittered much of the last twenty years of David's reign.

His adultery with Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah, were dark blots upon his character. The sin was pardoned, but it could not be left unpunished. And the punishment came from the same source as the sin.

> "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us[1]."

The curse of polygamy, permitted indeed but discountenanced by the Mosaic law, bore its natural fruit in the quarrels of sons, whom a mistaken affection had treated with foolish indulgence. Amnon's outrage, Absalom's revenge, his insurrection and wretched death, with all the miseries of civil war—these are the events which fill the pages of the history.

There are sufficient reasons to account for the temporary success of Absalom's rebellion, without accusing David of having alienated the affections of his people by misgovernment and neglect of his duties. The personal popularity of Absalom, supported by the dissatisfaction of the tribe of Judah at the loss of its special preeminence, "the still lingering hopes of the house of Saul and of the tribe of Benjamin, and the deep-rooted feeling of Ephraim and the northern tribes against Judah[2]," forces really antagonistic to one another, were combined for the moment in an attempt to overthrow David's authority. With Absalom's death the first of these elements was extinguished, but the two

[1] *King Lear*, A. v. Sc. iii. 170.
[2] Stanley's *Lect.* II. 107.

latter blazed out again in the insurrection headed by Sheba, which nearly anticipated by half a century the Disruption of the Kingdoms. The danger was averted for the time by Joab's promptitude, but it shewed sufficiently the instability of the foundations upon which David had to build up his kingdom.

11. The impression produced by the record of David's reign in the Book of Samuel is that its latter years were a period of almost unrelieved disaster. The prophet-author is dwelling on the consequences of David's sins, and therefore gives prominence to the calamities which punished them. But this impression needs to be corrected. The closing period of David's reign, after the suppression of Absalom's rebellion, must have been on the whole a time of steady growth and prosperity for the nation. Otherwise it could not have laid the firm foundation which it did for the unparalleled splendour of Solomon's reign. Administrative improvements, religious organization, preparations for building the Temple, occupied David, and were so successfully carried out, that Solomon succeeded to unchallenged empire, and was able at once to proceed with the building of the Temple.

12. One great calamity indeed cast its shadow over the tranquillity of this period. Infatuated for a moment by a spirit of ambition and pride, which represented, it seems, a corresponding spirit in the nation at large, David ordered a census to be taken. The chastisement of pestilence rebuked both king and nation for their error.

13. Here the compiler of the Book of Samuel ends his narrative, and rightly so. The remaining scenes of David's life are the prelude to the reign of Solomon. The preparations for the building of the Temple, the rebellion of Adonijah, the king's parting charge to Solomon, are fitly placed at the beginning of the new era rather than at the close of the old.

14. After thus briefly indicating the salient points of the history of David's reign, it remains to give some account of his organization of the kingdom.

(*a*) *Military organization.* The "Host," or main body of the army, consisted of all the men of age for military service.

The whole of this body was only called out in case of necessity, and received no special training. In order therefore to secure an effective army, David formed a national militia of twelve regiments, each twenty-four thousand strong. Each of them had its general, and was called out for a month's training in the year[1]. Besides this militia, there was a body-guard constantly under arms, known as "the Cherethites and Pelethites[2]," and a regiment of picked troops called the *Gibbôrîm* or Heroes, which was always maintained at the number of Six Hundred, in memory of the days of David's wanderings[3]. Special prowess was rewarded by admission to a band of Thirty[4], an honour comparable to that of knighthood; and exceptional deeds of daring had raised six warriors to a yet higher distinction, as "The First Three" and "The Second Three[5]." Supreme above all was Joab, the "Captain of the Host," second in power only to the king himself, unequalled as a warrior and indispensable to David.

(*b*) *Civil organization.* The rapid development of the kingdom necessitated careful arrangements for the administration of the state. The principal civil officers of the king's court were the Counsellor, the Recorder or Remembrancer, the Scribe or Secretary of State, the King's Companion or Friend, and, in the later years of his reign, the Superintendent of the Levy[6]. These, together with the king's sons, who had the title of "Ministers[7]," the two High-priests, the Commander-in-chief of the army, and the Captain of the body-guard, formed the king's privy council.

The management of the crown estates and revenues was entrusted to a number of officers stationed in different parts of the kingdom[8]: the maintenance of law and order was committed to a numerous body of magistrates and judges[9]: each tribe was placed under the government of a prince or ruler[10]. Thus far

[1] 1 Chron. xxvii. 1—15.
[2] See note on ch. viii. 18.
[3] See note on ch. xv. 18.
[4] 2 Sam. xxiii. 24—39.
[5] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 ff., and note on *v.* 13.
[6] See 2 Sam. viii. 16—18, xx. 23—26, and notes there.
[7] See note on ch. viii. 18.
[8] 1 Chr. xxvii. 25—31.
[9] 1 Chr. xxvi. 29—32.
[10] 1 Chr. xxvii. 16—22.

the scanty notices preserved in Chronicles indicate the existence of a thorough system of internal administration, though they do not enable us to determine its details.

(*c*) *Religious organization.* Religious institutions, no less than secular administration, occupied the care of David. He was himself the head and leader in religious movements[1], realising thereby the true ideal of the theocratic king, in complete contrast with Saul's antagonism to both prophets and priesthood. Gad "the Seer" and Nathan "the Prophet" were his confidential advisers: the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar[2], were among his most honoured counsellors. The Priests and Levites were classified, and told off for the performance of various duties "in the service of the house of the LORD[3];" some were trained as singers and musicians under the leadership of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun[4]; others had the duty of watching the gates assigned to them[5]; others again were constituted guardians of the treasury[6]. These more elaborate arrangements were made in the later years of David's reign, in connexion with his preparations for the Temple.

15. The main results of David's reign may be briefly summed up as follows. (*a*) He consolidated the tribes into a nation, binding together the discordant elements of which it was composed into a vigorous unity, not without struggles and opposition. Short as was the duration of this unity, it gave a new strength and new aspirations to Israel. (*b*) By his conquests he secured to Israel the undisputed possession of its country, thereby ensuring the free field which was indispensable for the expansion and development of the nation, and through it of the true Religion which had been entrusted to its guardianship. In these two points Saul had to some extent anticipated him, and made his success possible. (*c*) But the noblest result of David's work was the harmonious union of all the highest influences for good which were at work in the nation. For once

[1] See 2 Sam. vi. 1—19, with the parallel passages in 1 Chron.
[2] See Introductory note to ch. vi.
[3] 1 Chr. xxiii., xxiv.
[4] 1 Chr. xxv.
[5] 1 Chr. xxvi. 1—19.
[6] 1 Chr. xxvi. 20—28.

the religious and the secular powers acted in perfect cooperation, each contributing to the other's efficiency. The Theocratic Monarchy was to be no absolute despotism. Its king was the representative of Jehovah, and his power was limited by this relation. He must therefore act in obedience to the Will of Jehovah, communicated to him through the prophets. This was the ideal for which Samuel laboured. Saul was rejected for his proud endeavour to assert his own independence. David, though not without lapses and failures, on the whole realised the ideal, and was Israel's greatest, because truest, king. (*d*) Consequently, as will be seen further presently (Introd. Ch. VII.), his reign was always looked back to as the golden age of the nation, the type of a still more glorious age to which the national hope looked forward as the crown and consummation of its destiny.

Himself a warrior, he led the nation to victory; himself a prophet, and the pupil of one of the greatest of the prophets, he sympathised with the prophetic work, and yielded himself, without losing his royal dignity, to prophetic guidance; himself, though not by descent a priest, performing priestly functions, he was the patron of the hierarchy; and thus for a brief space, all the strongest and noblest powers of the nation were brought into harmony, and full scope given to their influences.

16. It remains to speak of David's character. "In the complexity of its elements, passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness—the soldier, the shepherd, the poet, the statesman, the priest, the prophet, the king—the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father—there is no character of the O. T. at all to be compared to that of David[1]." It was this many-sidedness of character, combined with the variety of experience through which he passed, which has made his Psalms a manual of devotion for minds of every character and of every age. Rich and varied as are the tones of the many voices which combine to form the Psalter, they are scarcely more rich and varied than the tones of the single voice of him who was its

[1] Dean Stanley in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible.*

Founder; passing as they do through every variation of jubilant praise and thanksgiving, unshaken trust in God, keenest suffering, bitter sorrow for sin, heartfelt repentance.

Men have wondered that the man who fell into such grievous sins should be called "the man after God's own heart," and regarded as the greatest king of Israel. His crimes were those of many an Oriental despot: but the sequel of those crimes—the earnest repentance, the prayer for renewal, the discipline of years by which the blessing of "a clean heart" and "a right spirit" was realised[1]—could have occurred nowhere but under the influence of true divine teaching. The whole matter is excellently summed up by "a critic not too indulgent to sacred characters" in an often, but not too often, quoted passage: "David, the Hebrew King, had fallen into sins enough: blackest crimes: there was no want of sins. And thereupon the unbelievers sneer and ask, 'Is this your man according to God's heart?' The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults? what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, true, often baffled, never ended, struggle of it be forgotten?...David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will recognise in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew[2]."

[1] See Maurice's *Prophets and Kings*, p. 66.
[2] Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-worship*, p. 43.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DAVID'S REIGN AND LIFE.

1. The whole of the Jewish dispensation was designed by God to be a preparation for the coming of Christ[1]. Many of its institutions, ordinances, events, and characters, were *typical:* that is to say, they were intended to be as it were *outlines* drawn beforehand to prefigure and foreshadow Christ, and to prepare men's minds to expect His coming.

2. The Kingdom of God in Israel was typical of the Kingdom of God afterwards to be established in the world ; and the King of Israel was typical of Christ, the King of that universal kingdom. The characteristics of his office, as interpreted by a succession of prophets, led men to look for One who should perfectly realise the ideal, which had been imperfectly realised by the best of their human kings[2].

3 The Theocratic King[3] was typical of Christ in the following respects :

(1) His distinctive title was "the LORD'S Anointed:" and under this very title men were led to look for the coming Deliverer as the MESSIAH or the CHRIST[4]. (Lk. ii. 26; John iv. 25.)

(2) He was the visible representative of Jehovah, who was Himself the true King of Israel ; the instrument of the Divine government, through whom He dispensed deliverance, help,

[1] See Introd. Ch. v.

[2] See Riehm's *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 59 ff.

[3] The ideal form of government for Israel was a *Theocracy*, or direct government by God without any human ruler (see Ch. v. § 4). *Theocratic King* is a convenient term to describe the true position of the King of Israel as God's vicegerent, ruling a kingdom which was not his own but God's. See the strong expressions of 1 Chr. xxviii. 5, xxix. 23.

[4] The Heb. word for "the Anointed One" is *Mâshîach*, which was transliterated in Greek as Μεσσίας or MESSIAH, and translated by ὁ Χριστός, *the Anointed One*, THE CHRIST.

and blessing. He would therefore be a conquering king, before whom no enemies could stand, if he was true to his calling[1]. So Christ came as the representative of God, with supreme authority on earth delegated to Him by His Father, and destined finally to conquer all His enemies[2].

(3) His will was therefore to be in perfect harmony with the will of God; and his kingdom would be, in proportion as it realised its purpose, a kingdom of righteousness and peace[3]; foreshadowing imperfectly what was never perfectly accomplished except by Christ[4].

(4) In virtue of this intimate relation to God he received the lofty title of God's Son[5], a title given to no other individual, signifying God's parental care over him, and the filial obedience due from him to God. This title is a most striking anticipation of the mysterious relationship of Christ to God.

(5) He was not only the representative of God to his people, but as the head of his people, he was their representative before God. So Christ as the Son of man, the second Adam, is the representative of the human race.

(6) As the head of a kingdom of priests (Ex. xix. 6), he had a priestly character[6], although he did not exercise all priestly functions. In this also he was a type of Christ, the "High-priest over the house of God" (Heb. x. 21).

(7) He was not only to be ruler of Israel, but "head of the heathen[7]," prefiguring the universal dominion of Christ.

4. In these respects any king of Israel, who at all fulfilled his office, was to some extent a type of Christ; and David,

[1] 2 Sam. vii. 9, 10; Ps. lxxxix. 22, 23.
[2] John i. 18; Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.
[3] See note on 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; and cp. Ps. lxxii. 1—7; Ps. ci.
[4] Ps. xl. 7, 8; John iv. 34.
[5] 2 Sam. vii. 14, *note;* Ps. ii. 7, lxxxix. 26, 27; Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5.
[6] This is sometimes questioned, but was certainly the case at least with David and Solomon. David wore priestly garments, and both he and Solomon dispensed priestly blessings, and claimed the right to appoint and depose high-priests (2 Sam. vi. 14, 18, viii. 17; 1 Kings ii. 27, viii. 14, 55). Cp. also Ps. cx. 4.
[7] 2 Sam. xxii. 44; Ps. lxxii. 8—11.

because he was the truest example of a king after God's own heart, was the most prominent and striking type of Christ among them. David however was a type in some respects in which his successors were not.

(1) He was not only King and Priest, but Prophet also[1], thus uniting in his own person the threefold character of Christ.

(2) He received the special title of "the servant of Jehovah," given only to a few who were raised up to do special work, such as Moses the Lawgiver, and Joshua the Conqueror of the Promised Land. This was a distinctive title of Christ[2]

(3) His birth-place determined the birth-place of the Messiah, whose birth at Bethlehem was brought about by a remarkable providence[3].

5. For these reasons the expected Deliverer was sometimes styled not merely *the Son of David*, in accordance with the prophecy in 2 Sam. vii., but *David*[4]. No name could be more appropriate for the ideal ruler of the future than that of the king who had most nearly attained to the ideal in the past.

6. But further, an examination of the quotations from the O. T. applied to Christ in the N. T. establishes the principle that *the lives of the saints under the Old Covenant were typical of Christ.* They were anticipations, as the lives of saints since Christ came have been imitations, of His life. Their struggles, their sufferings, their teachings, their aspirations, pointed forward to Christ, and were "fulfilled" in Him. That which was partially exemplified in them was completely exhibited in Him. Consequently "the Christian Church from the earliest times has delighted to read in the Psalms the emotions, the devotions, the life, of Christ Himself[5]."

David, more than any other single individual, was a type, an anticipatory likeness, of Christ the Perfect Man. In the fervency

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 ff.
[2] See Matt. xii. 18; Acts iii. 13, 26 (*Rev. Version*); Is. liii. 11, &c.
[3] Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6; John vii. 42.
[4] See Hos. iii. 5; Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25.
[5] Stanley's *Lect.* II. 134.

of his aspirations, in the closeness of his communion with God, in the firmness of his trust, in the strength of his love, he was unrivalled by any human character of the Old Testament. No man ever "touched humanity at so many points;" and the manysidedness of his character, and the variety of his experience, which qualified him for practical sympathy with all ranks and all conditions of life among his subjects, made him again a type of Him whom "it behoved in all things to be made like unto his brethren[1]." He was an eminent example of the spiritual capability of the human soul as a recipient of divine illumination, preparing the way for the highest Example of all.

7. In these respects, both as king and as man, David was an undoubted type of Christ. Many other striking correspondences between him and the antitype whom he prefigured may be noted; for example, his occupation as shepherd, first of his flock, and then of Israel[2]: his persecution by enemies, and elevation to reign through many sufferings and trials: the misunderstandings and scorn he met with from his own relations[3]: his betrayal by one who had been admitted to his closest confidence, and so forth: but though these analogies are most interesting and instructive, it may be questioned whether they can strictly speaking be called *typical*.

CHAPTER VIII.

PSALMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DAVID'S REIGN[4].

1. Of the Psalms ascribed to David by their titles many were in all probability not written by him; and of those in the case of which there is no reasonable ground for doubting the

[1] Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15.

[2] See note on 2 Sam. v. 2; and cp. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Micah v. 4; John x. 11.

[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 28; Mk. iii. 21; John vii. 3—5.

[4] This subject is most interestingly treated by Dr Maclaren in *The Life of David as reflected in his Psalms*. See also Lecture XXV. in Dean Stanley's *Lectures*.

accuracy of the title a large proportion cannot be connected with any definite event or particular period of his life. Those however which either by their titles, corroborated by their contents, or from internal evidence, can be assigned to particular epochs of his life, are most valuable additions to the history, and should be carefully studied in connexion with it.

2. (i) The Translation of the Ark to Jerusalem called forth a series of Psalms, first among which is Ps. ci. It expresses the high resolves and aspirations for the purity of his kingdom and his court which filled David's mind when he was meditating the transfer of the Ark to his new capital, which would become by virtue of its presence in an especial sense "the city of Jehovah" (*v.* 8). The eager exclamation "When wilt thou come unto me" (*v.* 2) expresses his desire to welcome the symbol of Jehovah's Presence as a dweller in his new city.

Ps. xv., in language closely resembling the opening verses of Ps. xxiv., sets forth the conditions of acceptable approach to God, and dwells upon the thoughts with which he would prepare the mind of his people for the solemn event about to be celebrated.

The date of Ps. lxviii. is disputed, but it may well be regarded as a grand choral hymn, composed by David to be sung at the removal of the Ark to Zion, as the procession left the house of Obed-Edom. The opening words re-echo the old watchword for the setting forward of the Ark in the wilderness (Num. x. 35). "God is represented, first as advancing at the head of the Israelites through the desert; then as leading them victoriously into Canaan; and finally as fixing His royal abode on Zion, whence He reigns in the majesty of universal dominion, acknowledged and feared by all the nations of the earth[1]."

Ps. xxiv. was beyond a doubt composed to be sung by choirs of Levites as the Ark passed through the gates of Zion to its new resting-place. "We can almost hear the creaking of the gates of the old fortress of Jebus, as their hinges swung sullenly open to admit the Ark of the Living God... Lift up your heads, O

[1] Dean Perowne's *Commentary on the Psalms.*

ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in[1]."

To these may perhaps be added Ps. cxxxii., the opening verses of which refer to this occasion, though it was probably not written until later; and Ps. xxx., apparently assigned by its title to the dedication of David's new palace on mount Zion (2 Sam. v. 11, 12).

The Psalms of this period are characterised by their lofty moral requirements, by a stern exclusiveness, a noble intolerance of pride and falsehood[2].

3. (ii) The spirit in which the wars of this period were waged is illustrated by Ps. xx., which is a litany to be sung on the eve of the king's going forth to battle; and by Ps. xxi., which is a Te Deum of thanksgiving for his return. To these may be added Ps. cx. and perhaps Ps. ii. Ps. lx. belongs to the wars with Syria and Edom[3].

4. (iii) The culmination of David's prosperity is celebrated in Ps. xviii. (2 Sam. xxii.), written probably soon after Nathan's visit (2 Sam. vii.), in that period of peace in which he conceived the wish to build an house for Jehovah. It is the fitting expression of a heart overflowing with praise and thanksgiving, and is unrivalled for the magnificence of its poetry and the sublimity of its thought.

5. (iv) David's Fall was the occasion of two of the most precious Psalms in the whole Psalter.

> "The rock is smitten, and to future years
> Springs ever fresh the tide of holy tears
> And holy music, whispering peace,
> Till time and sin together cease[4]."

The Fifty-first Psalm is David's prayer for pardon and renewal, springing from the newly-awakened conviction of his sin: the Thirty-second Psalm is a review of his experience written

[1] Wilberforce's *Heroes of Hebrew History*, p. 253.
[2] See Stanley's *Lectures*, II. 74.
[3] See note on ch. viii. 13.
[4] Christian Year, *Sixth Sunday after Trinity*.

somewhat later, in which he dwells upon the blessedness of forgiveness obtained, and describes the misery he had suffered while his sin was still unconfessed and unrepented of.

6. (v) The Flight from Absalom struck a rich vein of Psalmody. Ps. lxiii. is stated by its title to have been written by David "when he was in the wilderness of Judah," in all probability between the flight from Jerusalem and the passage of the Jordan. Ps. iii. is a morning hymn, and Ps. iv. an evening hymn, composed on the day following that on which he quitted Jerusalem. Ps. xxvi., and possibly Ps. lxii., refer to the traitors who had deserted him at this crisis; xxvii. and xxviii. probably describe his feelings during his exile at Mahanaim. The characteristic features of these Psalms are the consciousness of God's continued help, unbroken trust, firm assurance of ultimate deliverance; eager yearning for the privileges of the sanctuary. They expand the thought of David's words to Zadok: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both the ark and his habitation" (2 Sam. xv. 25).

Pss. xli. and lv. have been assigned to the time during which the conspiracy was being hatched: lxix. and cix. have very generally been supposed to refer to Ahithophel's treachery; and the Sept. title of cxliii. connects it with Absalom's rebellion. But these references are at best doubtful; and lxix. and cix. are almost certainly not Davidic.

7. (vi) There are no Psalms which can be pointed to with certainty as embodying the thoughts of David's later years. Ps. xxxvii. may indeed possibly be his, and if so, *vv.* 2—9 are a worthy summing-up of lessons learnt through the vicissitudes of a long life. Ps. ciii. is assigned by the title in the Syriac version to David's old age, but linguistic considerations almost forbid us to accept it as David's. The "last words of David" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7) seem to stand alone, and have no companion in the Psalter.

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THE

SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED,

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CH. I. 1—16. *The news of Saul's death brought to David.*

NOW it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David 1
was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites,
and David had abode two days in Ziklag; it came even to 2
pass on the third day, that behold, a man came out of the

CH. I. 1—16. THE NEWS OF SAUL'S DEATH BROUGHT TO DAVID.

1. *Now it came to pass*, &c.] The narrative of the closing chapters of the First Book is continued without any break. The division of the Books is purely artificial, and did not exist in the original Hebrew text. See *Introd.*, ch. i. § 1.

when David was returned] See 1 Sam. xxx. 26.

2. *on the third day*] The exact position of Ziklag in the *Negeb*, or "South country," has not been determined. But if we may place it in the neighbourhood of Beersheba (see note on 1 Sam. xxvii. 6), the distance from the battle-field of Gilboa was about 90 or 100 miles as the crow flies, between two and three days' journey for an active runner, so that the battle probably took place about the same time as David's return home.

a man came out of the camp from Saul] This expression and that of *v.* 3 seem to imply that the Amalekite represented himself as in some way attached to the Israelite army, either as a combatant, or more probably as a camp-follower. On the other hand, the words of *v.* 6, "I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa," seem to describe his presence on the battle-field as accidental. On the whole it is best to suppose that he was connected with the army, and to understand *v.* 6 to mean merely that his finding Saul was accidental.

camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and *so* it was, when he came to David, that he fell to
3 the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of
4 the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and
5 Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul
6 and Jonathan his son be dead? And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and lo, the chariots

At Mt. Gilboah.

with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head] With the same tokens of mourning as the man of Benjamin who bore the news of the disastrous defeat of Aphek to Shiloh. See 1 Sam. iv. 12, and note. There however the word rendered *clothes* is different, perhaps denoting *a military dress*, as in 1 Sam. xvii. 38: that used here is the ordinary term.

fell to the earth, and did obeisance] Recognising David as Saul's successor, and expecting a reward for his tidings.

did obeisance] *Obeisance*, derived from Lat. *obedire* through Fr. *obéissance*, was originally used in the literal sense of *obedience*, but in Bible-English is limited to the act of prostration, which was the outward token of obedience or reverence. The Heb. word, variously translated in the E. V. 'bow oneself,' 'bow down,' 'fall flat,' 'crouch,' 'reverence,' 'do reverence,' 'worship,' means literally *to bow oneself down*, and specially *to worship* God.

4. *How went the matter?*] Lit. *What was the affair?* the same phrase as that used by Eli in 1 Sam. iv. 16. The form of the Amalekite's answer also closely corresponds to that of the man of Benjamin there. The rout, the slaughter among the people, the death of the leaders, are mentioned in an ascending climax.

many of the people] No contradiction to 1 Sam. xxxi. 6, where "*all* his men" refers to Saul's immediate body-guard.

6. *As I happened by chance*] He represents himself as accidentally finding Saul, while wandering over Mount Gilboa in the confusion of the rout. See note on *v.* 2.

mount Gilboa] See note on 1 Sam. xxviii. 4.

Saul leaned upon his spear] This is not to be understood of attempted suicide (1 Sam. xxxi. 4), as though he was leaning upon his spear to pierce himself through. It is a tragic picture of the last scene. The wounded and weary king leans upon his spear—the emblem of his royalty—for support. His followers are scattered or dead: his pursuers are close at hand. Death, accompanied with all the insolence and mockery of a triumphant foe, stares him in the face.

and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he 7
looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I
answered, Here *am* I. And he said unto me, Who *art* 8
thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite. He said 9
unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me:
for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole
in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I 10
was sure that he could not live after *that* he was fallen: and
I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet
that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my
lord. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; 11
and likewise all the men that *were* with him: and they 12
mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for

chariots] It is not necessary to regard this as a lie of the Amalekite. Parts of the elevated tract may have been accessible to the Philistine chariots. Stanley speaks of "the green strip of table-land, where probably the last struggle was fought" (*Sinai and Pal.* p. 345).

9. *Stand...upon me*] Rather, **Stand by me**, or, **Rise up against me**, and similarly in *v.* 10. Saul is represented in *v.* 6 as still upright, not as lying prostrate on the ground.

anguish] The Heb. word occurs nowhere else, and its sense is doubtful. The Targum renders it *agony;* the LXX. *terrible darkness;* the Vulg. *distress* (*angustiae*). Probably it means **giddiness** or **cramp**, which made it impossible for him to defend himself any longer. The marg. renderings, *my coat of mail*, or, *my embroidered coat*, are improbable.

because my life is yet whole in me] A second reason for the request to slay him. He feared that he might fall alive into the hands of the Philistines. Cp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 4.

10. *after that he was fallen*] Not to be understood literally, of lying prostrate, but metaphorically, of defeat and disgrace. Cp.

> "I am a poor *fallen* man, unworthy now
> To be thy lord and master."
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *Hen. VIII.* Act III. Sc. 2.

the crown] In all probability not the State-crown, but a light **diadem**, or fillet, worn round the helmet as the mark of royalty.

the bracelet] Armlets are still worn by Oriental sovereigns. Kings and distinguished warriors are represented on both Egyptian and Assyrian monuments as wearing highly ornamented bracelets or armlets. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Armlet*, and Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, II. 322.

11. *on*] "On" used as we now use "of." Cp. 1 Sam. xxvii. 11.

12. *mourned*] The word literally denotes the *beating of the breast*, which is still a common expression of mourning in the East.

fasted until even] Fasting is mentioned as a sign of mourning in

Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.
13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger,
14 an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S
15 anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that
16 he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

1 Sam. xxxi. 13; 2 Sam. iii. 35, xii. 21, 22. The day's fast was considered to terminate at sunset, as at the present day in Mahommedan countries.

for the people of the LORD, *and for the house of Israel*] By "the people of Jehovah" is meant the army, gathered to fight Jehovah's battles against the heathen. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 28; and for *people=army* cp. *v.* 4 and 1 Sam. iv. 3. "The house of Israel" describes the whole nation united under Saul, and now broken and scattered by his defeat and death.

The Sept. has "for the people of *Judah*," a reading which involves a very slight change of letters, but is probably either an accidental corruption or an intentional emendation to get rid of the apparent tautology.

13. *the son of a stranger, an Amalekite*] Or, *the son of an Amalekite stranger*, i.e. an Amalekite who had migrated into the land of Israel. The term is one regularly used in the O.T. of foreigners residing in a country not their own.

14. *the* LORD'S *anointed*] The person of the king, consecrated to the service of Jehovah by anointing, was inviolable. Compare David's reiterated expressions on this point in 1 Sam. xxiv. 6, xxvi. 9, 11, 16; and the armourbearer's reverence in 1 Sam. xxxi. 4.

16. *for thy mouth*, &c.] For the expression cp. Job xv. 6; Lk. xix. 22. He had accused himself of a capital crime, for which he deserved to die. Righteous indignation, and not merely political prudence, dictated his immediate execution.

This account of Saul's death is obviously inconsistent with that given in 1 Sam. xxxi. It is useless to attempt to harmonize them, but it is quite unnecessary to assume that we have two different traditions of the manner of Saul's death. The Amalekite's story was clearly a fabrication. In wandering over the field of battle he had found the corpse of Saul and stripped it of its ornaments. With these he hastened to David, and invented his fictitious story in the hope of securing an additional reward for having with his own hand rid David of his bitterest enemy and removed the obstacle which stood between him and the throne. But he had formed a wrong estimate of the man he had to

17—27. *David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.*

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and 17
over Jonathan his son: (also he bade *them* teach the chil- 18
dren of Judah the *use of the* bow: behold, *it is* written in
the book of Jasher.)

deal with. Whether David believed him or not, he summarily inflicted the penalty which the Amalekite deserved according to his own avowal, and proved to all Israel his abhorrence of such an impious act.

David's chivalrous loyalty and generous unselfishness in mourning for the death of his unrelenting persecutor, whose removal opened the way for him to the throne, are striking evidences of the nobility of his character.

17—27. DAVID'S LAMENTATION FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN.

17. *lamented with this lamentation*] The technical expression for a *death-dirge* or *mournful elegy*, such as that pronounced by David over Abner (ch. iii. 33, 34), and by Jeremiah over Josiah (2 Chr. xxxv. 25).

18. *also he bade*, &c.] **And he gave commandment to teach the children of Judah the Bow.** The E. V. cannot be right in inserting "the use of," for the bow was a weapon already in common use. If the text is sound, "the Bow" must be a title given to David's elegy from the mention of Jonathan's bow in *v.* 22. Somewhat similarly the section of Exodus containing the account of the burning bush is called "the Bush" in Lk. xx. 37, and the second chapter of the Koran is called "the Cow" from the incidental mention in it of the sacrifice of a cow.

It must be noted however that the Vatican MS. of the LXX. omits the word *bow*, and reads simply "And he commanded to teach [it] to the children of Judah." Possibly therefore the word over which much discussion has been spent, has found its way into the text through some scribe's mistake, and should be struck out.

The elegy was to be learnt by heart by the people in order to preserve the memory of Saul and Jonathan fresh among them. Compare the direction concerning the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxi. 19), and the title of Psalm lx.

behold, it is written in the book of Jasher] The elegy was included in the volume known as *The Book of Jashar*, or, *the Upright*. (LXX. *βιβλίον τοῦ εὐθοῦς*; Vulg. *liber iustorum*.) This book is mentioned only here and in Josh. x. 13. "The Upright" is explained by some to mean Israel as the covenant people of God, and connected in etymology and sense with the title *Jeshurun* (Deut. xxxii. 15); by others it is referred to the heroes whose praises were celebrated in the book. All that can be inferred from the references to it is that it contained a collection of ancient poems, commemorating remarkable events or great heroes of the national history: so that it formed a "book of Golden

19 The beauty of Israel *is* slain upon thy high places:
How are the mighty fallen!
20 Tell *it* not in Gath,
Publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew,

Deeds" for the instruction of posterity, a "national anthology" to which additions would be made from time to time as occasion offered.

19. *The beauty of Israel*, &c.] Better, **Thy beauty** (lit. *the beauty*), **O Israel, upon thine high places is slain.** Saul and Jonathan are thus described as the chief ornament and honour of Israel. The word translated *glory* may also mean *roe* or *gazelle*, a rendering which is adopted by some commentators, who refer it to Jonathan. There is not however any satisfactory evidence to shew that Jonathan's personal beauty and swiftness of foot in attack or retreat had gained for him among the troops the name of 'the Gazelle,' as Ewald supposes (*Hist. of Israel*, III. 30), and as the elegy celebrates both Saul and Jonathan, the opening word cannot be limited to the latter only.

thy high places] Gilboa is meant. The expression suggests the extremity of the disaster, when the mountain-strongholds of the land were forced and their defenders slain. Cp. note on ch. xxii. 34.

20. *Tell it not in Gath*, &c.] Gath on account of its political importance, Askelon as a great religious centre, are chosen as representative of the whole country. Gath seems to have had special prominence as the city of Achish; not impossibly the temple of Ashtaroth in which Saul's armour was deposited was the famous temple of Venus at Askelon. See note on 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. The phrase "Tell it not in Gath" is quoted in Micah i. 10 (E.V. declare), and perhaps passed into a proverb.

Publish it not] Additional force is gained by keeping the usual meaning of the word, **publish not the good news** (LXX. accurately, μὴ εὐαγγελίσησθε). Of course the words can only be understood as a poetical wish that it were possible for Israel to be spared the degradation of Philistine triumph. The news was carried at once throughout the land (1 Sam. xxxi. 9).

the daughters of the Philistines] Victories were celebrated by the women of the country with public songs and dances. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ex. xv. 20, 21.

the uncircumcised] The common epithet for the Philistines, as heathen who had no share in Jehovah's covenant with Israel. No small part of the bitterness of defeat to a pious heart consisted in the triumph of the heathen over God's inheritance. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

21. *let there be no dew*, &c.] The language is poetical. Nature is as it were summoned to share in the mourning. The scene of such a terrible disaster should be unvisited by fertilizing dew and rain, and lie

Neither *let there be* rain upon you, nor fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* anointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain, 22
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

smitten with eternal barrenness. For the thought that nature can sympathize with man compare Ezek. xxxi. 15.

nor fields of offerings] An expansion of the preceding thought. Gilboa should no longer possess fruitful fields, to produce tithes and offerings for Jehovah. The greatest curse which can befall it is to be cut off from rendering service to Jehovah. Compare the description of extreme famine in Joel i. 9.

is vilely cast away] This rendering seems to be an attempt to combine two possible meanings of the Heb. word, (*a*) *was cast away*, (*b*) *was defiled* with blood and dust, of which the latter is probably right.

as though he had *not* been *anointed with oil*] The original, which might be rendered exactly **the shield of Saul unanointed with oil**, leaves it uncertain whether the epithet *anointed* belongs to the shield or to Saul. (*a*) Most commentators understand it to refer to the shield, left upon the battle-field, uncared for, uncleansed from the stains of the combat. Shields made of metal were oiled to polish them; those made of wood and leather, to preserve them, and make missiles glide off easily. Cp. Is. xxi. 5; and Verg. *Aen.* VII. 626:

> "Pars leves clypeos et spicula lucida tergunt
> Arvina pingui."

> "With unctuous lard their shields they clean,
> And make their javelins bright and sheen."

(*b*) On the other hand this term *anointed* is everywhere else applied to persons—in the books of Samuel always to the King—and not to things, and it is certainly grammatically possible to connect it with Saul, as is done by the E. V. The sense thus gained is much more forcible. 'There the shield of mighty heroes was defiled—yea even the shield of Saul, whose consecrated person shared the common fate as though he had never been set apart as the Anointed of Jehovah.'

22. *From the blood*, &c.] In the figurative language of poetry arrows are represented as *drinking blood*, the sword as *eating flesh*. See Deut. xxxii. 42; Is. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 10.

the bow of Jonathan] His favourite weapon, by the gift of which he sealed his friendship with David. See 1 Sam. xviii. 4, xx. 20. Was it a reminiscence of that gift which made David call this elegy *the Bow?*

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights,
Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.
26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
27 How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

23. *lovely and pleasant*] Perhaps rather, **loving and kindly.** The words express the mutual affection which existed between father and son. Jonathan remained faithful to his filial duty even when his father was persecuting his closest friend, and Saul, in spite of temporary outbursts of passion, loved his son to the last. Some commentators would render "*in their lives and in their death they were not divided*," but the E. V. preserves the balance of the clauses better.

swifter than eagles] Cp. Jer. iv. 13; Hab. i. 8.

stronger than lions] Cp. ch. xvii. 10; Jud. xiv. 18.

24. *Ye daughters of Israel*] The women who had once celebrated Saul's triumphs, and shared the spoil of his victories, are summoned to lament his loss. This incidental mention indicates how much Saul's successful wars, so briefly alluded to in the history of his reign (1 Sam. xiv. 47), had enriched the nation.

with other *delights*] A possible rendering: but *with delights* perhaps rather means *delicately* or *richly*.

25. *O Jonathan*, thou wast *slain in thine high places*] **O Jonathan, slain upon thine high places!** The insertion of *thou wast* weakens the force and pathos. Cp. *v.* 19. The hero of a hundred fights, slain at last in those mountain strong-holds of his country which he had once won and defended so successfully (1 Sam. xiv.).

27. *How are the mighty fallen*] This thrice-repeated refrain sounds the keynote of the elegy. Cp. Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5, cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31.

the weapons of war] Metaphorically, of Saul and Jonathan as the instruments of battle for the nation. Cp. Is. xiii. 5, Acts ix. 15 (σκεῦος as in the LXX. here). To understand it literally of swords and spears would close the most pathetic of elegies with an incredible bathos.

Dean Stanley observes that "Over the portal of the sepulchral chapel of the most famous of mediaeval heroes—the tomb of the Cid near

CH. II. 1—7. *David anointed King over Judah at Hebron. His message to the Gileadites.*

And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of 2
the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of
Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David
said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.
So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam 2
the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

Burgos—we find inscribed the words of David "How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished," "*Quomodo ceciderunt robusti, et perierunt arma bellica*" (*Lect.* II. 31).

It is needless to dwell on the poetic beauty, the chivalrous loyalty, the tender love, which characterize this most pathetic of funeral odes.

"Saul had fallen with all his sins upon his head, fallen in the bitterness of despair, and as it might have seemed to mortal eye, under the shadow of the curse of God. But not only is there in David's lament no revengeful feeling at the death of his persecutor . . . . but he dwells with unmixed love on the brighter recollections of the departed. He speaks only of the Saul of earlier times, the mighty conqueror, the delight of his people, the father of his beloved and faithful friend; like him in life, united with him in death. Such expressions...may fairly be taken as justifying the irrepressible instinct of humanity which compels us to dwell on the best qualities of those who have just departed." Stanley, *Lect.* II. 30. See too a noble passage to the same effect in Maurice's *Prophets and Kings*, Serm. II., p. 32.

CH. II. 1—7. DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER JUDAH AT HEBRON. HIS MESSAGE TO THE GILEADITES.

1. *after this*] After the defeat of Israel and the death of Saul and Jonathan, David saw that the way was clear for the fulfilment of God's promise that he should be king. Still he desired divine direction how to act in this crisis. He therefore "inquired of the LORD" by means of the Urim and Thummim through the High-priest Abiathar. See notes on 1 Sam. x. 22, xxiii. 6.

Unto Hebron] The central position of Hebron in the tribe of Judah, its mountainous and defensible situation, its importance as a priestly settlement and an ancient royal city, the patriarchal associations connected with it, combined to render it the most suitable capital for the new kingdom, while the North was held partly by the Philistines, partly by Saul's adherents. In its neighbourhood moreover David had spent a considerable part of his fugitive life, and gained many supporters. See 1 Sam. xxx. 31, and note there.

2. *Ahinoam—Abigail*] Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 42, 43. The *Jezreel* to which Ahinoam belonged was a city in the mountains of Judah near Carmel and Juttah.

3 And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every
man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of
4 Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they
anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they
told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were*
5 *they* that buried Saul. And David sent messengers unto
the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be*
ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto
6 your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him. And now
the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also
will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this
7 thing. Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and
be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the
house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

3. *in the cities of Hebron*] The towns and villages of the district round Hebron.

4. *the men of Judah came*] An assembly of David's own tribe was held in order to elect him king. No doubt he had previously secured the support of the elders. Cp. 1 Sam. xxx. 26.

they anointed David] David had already been anointed privately by Samuel to mark God's choice of him as the future king, but it was natural that the ceremony should now be repeated publicly as the formal inauguration of his reign, and even a third time, when he was made king over all Israel (ch. v. 3). Similarly Saul was first privately anointed (1 Sam. x. 1), and afterwards publicly installed in his office, and possibly anointed a second time (1 Sam. xi. 14, 15, note). On the significance of the rite of anointing see note on 1 Sam. x. 1.

And they told David] The connexion is obscure. We should expect a fresh verse and paragraph. Apparently either the announcement was intended to indicate the quarter in which opposition to his authority was most probable, or it was an answer to David's inquiry whether the body of his predecessor had received fitting burial. In either case the embassy to the men of Jabesh was prompted by policy no less than by gratitude. If David could secure the support of the capital of Gilead (1 Sam. xi. 1), he might reckon on speedily extending his power over the whole country. His conciliatory message is virtually an appeal to them to recognise him as Saul's legitimate successor.

6. *the* LORD *shew kindness and truth unto you*] Kindness and truth, i. e. *mercy* and *faithfulness*, are attributes of God's character often coupled together. See Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. xxv. 10, xl. 11, lvii. 3, lxxxvi. 15, &c.

I also will requite you this kindness] Render, **I also will shew you this good**, viz. the honourable embassy of thanks, and the friendly spirit which it attested.

7. *be ye valiant*] The following clause, which might be rendered "for *though* your master Saul is dead, *yet* the house of Judah, &c.,"

8—11. *Ish-bosheth set up by Abner as a rival to David.*

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish- 8
bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over *to* Mahanaim;
and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, 9

makes it plain that David hoped the men of Jabesh would join him, and hold the land of Gilead against the Philistines until he could come to their aid. As however Gilead became the head-quarters of his rival Ish-bosheth, it does not appear that the embassy was successful.

8—11. ISH-BOSHETH SET UP BY ABNER AS A RIVAL TO DAVID.

8. *Abner*] Both by his relationship of first cousin to Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 50, note), and by his office as commander of the army, Abner was marked out as the natural champion of Saul's house.

took] Better, **had taken.** The historian goes back to relate events immediately succeeding the battle of Gilboa. Abner had escaped from the fatal field and carried Ish-bosheth with him across the Jordan, whither it would seem there was a general retreat, while the country west of the Jordan was abandoned to the Philistines (1 Sam. xxxi. 7).

Ish-bosheth] Saul's fourth son, not previously mentioned, was a mere tool in the hands of Abner. His original name, as given in the genealogies in 1 Chr. viii. 33, ix. 39, was Esh-baal (=*man of Baal*), but this has been changed to Ish-bosheth (=*man of shame*), to avoid the scandal of pronouncing the name of the false god Baal. Compare the substitution of Mephibosheth for Meribbaal (2 Sam. iv. 4; 1 Chr. viii. 34), and Jerubbesheth for Jerubbaal (2 Sam. xi. 21; Jud. viii. 35), and see Hos. ix. 10; Jer. xi. 13. There are indications that Esh-baal was the original reading here, and the change may have been made in books commonly read, while the original form was retained in the genealogy.

As regards the origin of the name, it is a question whether it was a relic of the old Baal worship, or whether *baal* (=lord) was at one time used as a title of Jehovah until discredited by idolatry (Hos. ii. 16).

to Mahanaim] Mahanaim (=*two hosts*), "the spot consecrated by the presence of God in primeval times, where Jacob had divided his people into 'two hosts,' and had seen the 'two hosts' of the angelic vision" (Gen. xxxii. 2, 10), was chosen by Abner as the capital of Ish-bosheth's kingdom. Afterwards it became the retreat of David when he fled from Absalom (ch. xvii. 24), and at that time was a fortified town with walls and gates (ch. xviii. 24). It was situated on the frontier between Gad and Manasseh (Josh. xiii. 26, 30), but its exact position has not been identified with certainty. Canon Tristram places it at *Mahneh*, a few miles E. of Jabesh-Gilead (*Land of Israel*, p. 474).

9. *Gilead*] Here apparently, as in Josh. xxii. 9, Gilead includes the whole district occupied by the Israelites to the E. of the Jordan, and not merely the central portion of it, between the S. end of the Lake of Gennesaret and the N. end of the Dead Sea.

the Ashurites] Probably an alternative form or a corrupt reading for

and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin,
10 and over all Israel. Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years
old when he *began* to reign over Israel, and reigned two
11 years. But the house of Judah followed David. And the
time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah
was seven years and six months.

12—17. *War between Ish-bosheth and David. The Combat at Gibeon.*

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-
bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

Asherites (Jud. i. 32), i. e. the tribe of Asher, named as the principal inhabitants of Western Palestine north of the plain of Esdraelon. The Targum gives "house of Asher." The Vulgate and Syriac versions however read *Geshurites*. If this reading is adopted, by Geshurites must be understood the tribe which maintained itself among the Israelites in the district S. of Mount Hermon (Josh. xiii. 13), to be distinguished from the independent kingdom of Geshur in Syria (ch. iii. 3), and from the Geshurites on the borders of Philistia (1 Sam. xxvii. 8).

Jezreel. The great plain of Esdraelon is thus named from its principal city. See note on 1 Sam. xxix. 1.

all Israel] Ish-bosheth's dominions were gradually extended until they included all the country which afterwards formed the kingdom of Israel as distinguished from that of Judah.

10. *forty years old*] This statement is surprising, even if we reduce Ish-bosheth's age at Saul's death to $34\frac{1}{2}$, by supposing that his accession is dated $5\frac{1}{2}$ years after that event; and it is possible that the numeral has been corrupted in transcription. As it stands, it involves a double difficulty. (*a*) About 32 years is the most that can be assigned to Saul's reign (see note on 1 Sam. xiii. 1, and Introd. to 1 Sam. p. 23), so that it represents his youngest son as born before his accession, which is improbable. (*b*) Ish-bosheth's eldest brother Jonathan seems to have been about the same age as David, and therefore not much more than thirty at the time of his death.

two years] The duration of Ish-bosheth's reign is probably reckoned from the time when Abner succeeded in establishing his authority over *all* Israel. Five years and a half were occupied with the reconquest of the land from the Philistines, and these two years synchronize with the last two of David's reign at Hebron. No great interval seems to have elapsed between the deaths of Abner and Ish-bosheth, and David's recognition as king of Israel.

12–17. War between Ish-bosheth and David. The Combat at Gibeon.

12. *went out*] The technical expression for going to war. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 30. After establishing Ish-bosheth's power over all Israel,

And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, 13
went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and

Abner turned his arms against Judah, and marched with his army from Ish-bosheth's capital, Mahanaim, to Gibeon, where David's army under the command of Joab met him.

to Gibeon] The site of Gibeon (=*belonging to*, or *built on*, *a hill*) is fixed with certainty on a rounded hill five miles N.W. of Jerusalem, which still bears the name *El-Jib*. Gibeon was the largest of the four cities of the Hivites (Josh. x. 2), famous for the stratagem by which its inhabitants procured a treaty from Joshua (Josh. ix. 3 ff.). It was in the territory of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), and specially assigned to the priests (Josh. xxi. 17). Here Amasa met his death by the treacherous hand of Joab (2 Sam. xx. 5—10). It gained its chief importance in the reigns of David and Solomon, as the great centre of worship at which the Tabernacle and the Altar of Burnt-offering were set up before the building of the Temple (2 Chr. i. 3, 5), at which Solomon celebrated his accession with solemn sacrifices, and God appeared to him in vision (1 Kings iii. 4—15).

13. *Joab the son of Zeruiah*] The eldest of David's three nephews, the son of his sister Zeruiah (1 Chr. ii. 16). Next to the king himself he occupies the most conspicuous position in the history of David's reign. Already he appears to have acted as commander-in-chief of the army, though his formal appointment to that post was the reward of his valour at the capture of Jebus (1 Chr. xi. 6; 2 Sam. viii. 16). In this capacity he (*a*) conducted the war against the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. x. 7); (*b*) completed the conquest of Edom (1 Kings xi. 15, 16); (*c*) defeated the Ammonites in a second war, and took their capital (2 Sam. xi. 1, xii. 26).

With a too ready subservience he carried out David's plan for getting rid of Uriah (2 Sam. xi. 14 ff.), a service which increased his influence over David, by giving him the possession of his guilty secret. (See Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, Part II. ch. II.) We find him scheming to secure the restoration of Absalom to David's favour (2 Sam. xiv.), yet remaining loyal to David in Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. xviii. 2).

The vindictive unscrupulousness of his character is illustrated by his murder of Abner in revenge for the death of Asahel (2 Sam. iii. 27); of Absalom, in spite of David's express command (2 Sam. xviii. 14); of Amasa, who was appointed to supersede him (2 Sam. xx. 10).

Too valuable to be dispensed with, too fierce to be controlled, he was a continual source of vexation to David (2 Sam. iii. 39), who gave Solomon a dying charge not to leave his crimes unpunished (1 Kings ii. 5, 6). His complicity in Adonijah's rebellion filled up the measure of his iniquity, and he met a traitor's death in spite of his taking sanctuary at the altar in Gibeon (1 Kings ii. 28—34).

by the pool of Gibeon] "A few rods from the village [of *El-Jib*], just below the top of the ridge towards the north, is a fine fountain of water. It is in a cave excavated in and under the high rock, so as to

they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the
14 other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to
Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us.
15 And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went
over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to
Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of
16 David. And they caught every one his fellow by the head,
and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down
together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim,

form a large subterranean reservoir. Not far below it, among the olive trees, are the remains of another open reservoir, perhaps 120 feet in length by 100 in breadth." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* 1. 455. The "pool of Gibeon" may well be the waters of this fountain and reservoir. It is again referred to in Jer. xli. 12 as "the great waters that are in Gibeon."

they sat down] i.e. halted and encamped.

14. *Let the young men now arise*] "Young men" here means "servants" or "soldiers." Cp. ch. iv. 12. Desirous to avoid the horrors of a civil war, which would weaken the whole nation in the face of its common enemy the Philistines, perhaps also prompted by friendly relations with Joab, Abner proposes to decide the day by a combat between two bodies of picked men. The combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, which decided the war between Alba and Rome, affords a parallel in classical story. Livy represents the Alban dictator, Mettius Fuffetius, as urging this plan of ending the war, lest both nations, weakened by the losses of a general battle, should fall into the hands of their common enemy the Etruscans. See Livy 1. 23—25.

and play before us] The word "play" is used euphemistically in reference to fighting. There is no indication that a bloodless tournament was intended. Livy calls the combat above referred to "minime gratum spectaculum," "an exhibition which was by no means an amusement."

15. *there arose and went over by number*] A fixed number from either side met on neutral ground between the two armies.

of Benjamin] Saul's own tribe provided the champions for his cause. Cp. *v.* 25.

16. *And they caught*, &c.] Self-defence was forgotten in the ferocity of the struggle, and all the combatants fell together by a mutual slaughter.

Helkath-hazzurim] This obscure name is variously explained as *the field* or *plat*, (*a*) *of sharp edges*, in allusion to the swords which proved so fatal; (*b*) *of strong men*, literally *rocks*, from the rock-like obstinacy with which they fought; so the Vulg. *ager robustorum*; (*c*) *of plotters*, the rendering of the LXX. (μερὶς τῶν ἐπιβούλων), which involves a slight change in the Hebrew word, implying that there was some foul play in the combat; (*d*) *of sides*, according to a conjectural emendation

which *is* in Gibeon. And there was a very sore battle that 17
day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before
the servants of David.

18—23. *The Death of Asahel.*

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and 18
Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as
a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in 19
going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from
following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him, and 20
said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, I *am*. And 21
Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to
thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and
take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside
from following of him. And Abner said again to Asahel, 22
Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I
smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my
face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit he refused to turn aside: 23
wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote

suggested in the *Speaker's Commentary*, in allusion to the phrase "thrust his sword in his fellow's side." Either the first or second explanation is the most probable.

17. *And there was a very sore battle that day*] The combat of champions having proved indecisive, a severe general engagement took place, ending in the defeat of Abner's forces.

18—23. The Death of Asahel.

18. *three sons of Zeruiah*] The standing designation of David's nephews, to shew their relationship to him (1 Chr. ii. 16).

as a wild roe] The wild roe or **gazelle**, which still abounds in Palestine, is celebrated for its swiftness, grace, beauty, and gentleness. Cp. 1 Chr. xii. 8; Prov. vi. 5. See Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 127.

21. *take thee his armour*] Probably, as in Jud. xiv. 19, **his spoil**: i.e. if Asahel was desirous of spoil, he might find it elsewhere, instead of attacking a practised warrior at the risk of his life.

22. *Turn thee aside*] Asahel was probably a mere stripling, and no match for Abner, who, wishing to avoid a feud with Joab and an obstacle to making favourable terms with David on the fall of Saul's house, again exhorted Asahel to abandon the pursuit.

hold up my face to Joab] Meet him with the steady gaze which is the index of a clear conscience, the opposite of the *downcast* look which betokens shame and guilt. Cp. Job xi. 15.

23. *with the hinder end of the spear*] Abner defended himself in this

him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

24—32. *The Pursuit. Asahel's burial.*

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah *by* the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.
25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top
26 of a hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid
27 the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, *As* God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in

way with a view to disable rather than kill Asahel. But the butt-end of the spear, pointed or shod with iron to be stuck in the ground (1 Sam. xxvi. 7; Hom. *Il.* x. 153), dealt a fatal blow.

under the fifth rib] The E. V. follows the Jewish commentators in thus rendering a word which occurs in three other passages of this book (iii. 27, iv. 6, xx. 10) and nowhere else. **In the belly** is however the more probable meaning.

stood still] Riveted to the spot with awe and grief, mourning the untimely fate of the young hero. Cp. ch. xx. 12.

24—32. The Pursuit. Asahel's burial.

24. *Joab also*, &c.] **And Joab** and Abishai continued the pursuit, in contrast to those who halted at the scene of Asahel's death.

the hill of Ammah... Giah] Nothing is known of these places, but the minuteness of topographical detail is an indication that the history was written by one who was familiar with the circumstances.

the wilderness of Gibeon] The untilled tract of pasture-lands, lying east of the city.

25. *the children of Benjamin*] The men of Saul's tribe shew themselves prepared to fight for his son's cause to the last. Cp. *v.* 15.

became one troop] The word means properly a *knot* or *band*. Abner chose a strong position in which to rally the remnant of his scattered forces into a solid phalanx.

26. *that it will be bitterness in the latter end*] Either, that the final struggle of desperate men when driven to bay will be the fiercest; or, that any further prosecution of the contest will merely aggravate the bitterness of hostility between the tribes.

27. *unless thou hadst spoken*] Abner found fault with Joab for continuing the pursuit. Joab retorts that Abner himself was to blame for

the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the 28
people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more. And Abner and his men walked all 29
that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went *through* all Bithron, and they came *to* Mahanaim. And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had 30
gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of 31
David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died. And they took up 32
Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which *was in* Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

the commencement of the battle. *Unless thou hadst spoken* (*v.* 14), and challenged us to fight, *the armies might have separated this morning without coming to blows.* Joab believed that the civil war might have been avoided by timely negotiation. This explanation is the simplest, and fits the context best. Another way of taking it is, *Unless thou hadst spoken*, and asked for a cessation of hostilities, *then to-morrow morning*, but not before, *the people*, &c.; i.e. Joab boasts that his compliance with Abner's request was no sign of weakness on his part, for he might have continued the pursuit until morning. But this meaning is less obvious, and less suitable as an answer to Abner.

28. *neither fought they any more*] For the time being only. It was not the final end of the war, which lasted for a long time afterwards (ch. iii. 1).

29. *walked all that night*] Fearing a renewal of hostilities they made good their retreat at once.

through the plain] **The Arâbâh**, or "desert tract which extends along the valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Gennesareth, now called by the Arabs El-Ghor." Stanley, *Sinai and Pal.* p. 487.

through all Bithron] Probably, as the name (derived from a root meaning *to cut*) implies, some *ravine*, or *district intersected by ravines*, between the Jordan and Mahanaim.

32. *in the sepulchre of his father...in Beth-lehem*] The only reference to Zeruiah's husband, who appears from this notice to have been a Bethlehemite. Josephus calls him *Suri* (Σουρί).

went all night] Clearly the night after Asahel's burial, not the night after the battle. The fighting was not over till after sunset (*v.* 24), and it would have been impossible to collect the army, make necessary arrangements, and march a distance of at least 26 miles from Gibeon to Hebron, burying Asahel on the way. Joab no doubt spent the night at Gibeon, marched to Bethlehem the next day, and after burying his brother, hastened on to report himself to David at Hebron.

CH. III. 1—5. *Progress of David's cause. His family.*

3 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and
the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger,
2 and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto
David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was
3 Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and his second, Chi-
leab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the
third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai
4 king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of

CH. III. 1—5. PROGRESS OF DAVID'S CAUSE. HIS FAMILY.

2. *And unto David*, &c.] The list of David's sons born in Hebron is given again in 1 Chr. iii. 1—3, apparently in an independent form, but with only one important variation. It appears to interrupt the course of the narrative here, but it is quite in accordance with the usual practice of O.T. historians to insert information about the family of a king at critical points in the history of his reign, and moreover it is in place here as a practical evidence of the strengthening of David's house. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 49—51; 2 Sam. v. 13—16.

Amnon] Infamous for the sin which cost him his life, and indirectly proved the source of shame and calamity to his family and nation. See on ch. xiii.

3. *Chileab*] Called in Chron. *Daniel*, the meaning of which name, "God is my judge," suggests that it may have been given him to commemorate God's judgment upon Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 39; cp. Gen. xxx. 6). Some suppose that he bore both names, but the Sept. reading here *Daluiah* (Δαλουΐα), and the identity of the last three letters of *Chileab* in the Hebrew with the first three of the following word, make it extremely probable that the text of Samuel is corrupt.

Absalom] Whose name, "*Father of Peace*," was belied by his conduct, the gloomy history of which occupies chaps. xiii.—xviii. of this book.

Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur] This marriage with a foreign princess, which was contrary to the spirit of the law (Ex. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3; Josh. xxiii. 12), and bore such bitter fruit, may have been prompted by political reasons, especially the desirability of securing an ally in the neighbourhood of Ish-bosheth's capital. Talmai's kingdom was a part of Aram or Syria (ch. xv. 8), adjoining the province of Argob in the north-east of Bashan (Deut. iii. 14): probably in the wild and rocky region now called *El-Lejah*. As Talmai was the name of one of the giant "sons of Anak" who were expelled from Hebron by Caleb (Josh. xv. 14), and as Geshur was close to the kingdom of Og, who was of the remnant of the giants, it is tempting to conjecture that there may have been some connexion between the families, which would account for David's marrying the daughter of the king of Geshur while resident at Hebron.

Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and 5
the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born
to David in Hebron.

6—11. *Quarrel between Abner and Ish-bosheth.*

And it came to pass, while there was war between the 6
house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made
himself strong for the house of Saul. And Saul had a con- 7

4. *Adonijah*] Who made an ill return for his father's indulgence (1 Kings i. 6) by setting up a rival claim to the throne in opposition to Solomon, in which he was supported by Joab and Abiathar (1 Kings i. 5 ff.). He was pardoned at the time, but shortly afterwards put to death for preferring a request which, viewed in the light of Oriental customs, was tantamount to repeated treason.

Thus three of the six sons born to David in Hebron attained an unenviable notoriety; the remaining three, who are not mentioned again in the history, are happy in their obscurity.

5. *Eglah David's wife*] A Jewish tradition as old as the time of Jerome (*Quaest. Hebr. in libros Regum*) makes Eglah (=*heifer*, cp. Jud. xiv. 18) another name for *Michal*, who is supposed to be particularly distinguished both here and in 1 Chr. iii. 3 as *David's wife*, because she was his first and best-loved. If so, her position last in the list may be accounted for because she was separated from David for a time, and only returned to him towards the close of his residence in Hebron (*v.* 13), so that Ithream was the youngest of his sons born there.

Polygamy was tolerated by the Mosaic legislation as an existing custom, but discouraged as contrary to the original institution and true ideal of marriage (Deut. xxi. 15—17; xvii. 17; Gen. ii. 24, of which perhaps Gen. xxxi. 50 is a corrupt reminiscence). David's family history is a standing monument of the pernicious effects of this practice, which are perpetuated to this day in Oriental countries, where "contentions, envyings, jealousies and quarrels among the wives, as well as between the different sets of children" still prevail. See Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, II. p. 559.

6—11. Quarrel between Abner and Ish-bosheth.

6. *made himself strong*] Or, **shewed himself strong**. Ish-bosheth was evidently weak and incapable, a mere puppet in the hands of Abner, who had made himself the mainstay of Saul's house, partly from his family connexion, partly with a view to secure the greatest amount of influence, possibly with the hope of eventually becoming king himself. At length foreseeing the impossibility of continuing a successful opposition to David's growing power, he took the opportunity of a quarrel with Ish-bosheth to make such overtures to David as might secure him favourable terms and an influential position.

cubine, whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto
8 my father's concubine? Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, *Am* I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness *this* day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning *this* wo-
9 man? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the
10 LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; to trans-

7. *Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah*] The heroine of the tragic story related in ch. xxi. 8—11.

and Ish-bosheth *said*] *Ish-bosheth* has fallen out of the Heb. text. The Sept. has *Ish-bosheth the son of Saul;* the Vulg. *Ish-bosheth.*

Wherefore, &c.] An Oriental monarch took possession of his predecessor's harem. Cp. ch. xii. 8, xvi. 21; 1 Kings ii. 22. There is no further indication that Abner intended to dethrone Ish-bosheth, but the act was an invasion of royal rights, and consequently implicit treason.

8. *Am I a dog's head*, &c.] Render, **Am I a dog's head belonging to Judah? This day do I shew kindness...and thou hast charged me!** &c. i.e. Am I at once despicable and hostile to your interests? Nay, I am faithful to the house of Saul, otherwise I should long ago have made terms with David by surrendering you into his hands.

In the East in ancient times as at the present day, dogs, although used for guarding flocks and houses (Job xxx. 1; Is. lvi. 10), were chiefly seen prowling about towns in a half-wild condition, owning no master, living on offal and garbage. Cp. Ps. lix. 14, 15; 1 Kings xxi. 19, 23, 24, xxii. 38. Hence the aversion with which they were regarded, and "dog" became (1), as here, a term of reproach and contempt; cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8, xvi. 9; 2 Kings viii. 13: (2) an expression for fierce and cruel men (Ps. xxii. 16): (3) a name for impure persons (Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15). See Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 78.

9. *So do God*, &c.] An oath characteristic of the books of Samuel and Kings. See note on 1 Sam. iii. 17.

as the LORD *hath sworn to David*] No express divine *oath* promising the kingdom to David is recorded: but Samuel's solemn declaration to Saul (1 Sam. xv. 28, 29), and his choice and anointing of David by divine command (1 Sam. xvi. 1—12), were equivalent to it. It seems to have been generally known that David was designated by God to be Saul's successor (1 Sam. xxv. 28—31; 2 Sam. v. 2). "Abner is self-convicted by these words. He knew that the Lord had sworn to give the throne to David, and yet he had resisted—consciously resisted—to the best of his power the fulfilment of that high decree. He now reaps his reward in this, that his return to what was really his

late the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba. And he could not answer Abner a word 11
again, because he feared him.

12—21. *Abner's negotiations with David.*

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, 12
saying, Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee. And he said, Well; I 13
will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to

duty, bears the aspect of treachery, meanness, and dishonour. It now devolved upon him to undo his own work, whereas at the first it was in his power to subside into graceful and honourable acquiescence in a decree which, although distasteful to him, he could not and ought not to resist. Had he done this, his acknowledged abilities might have secured for him no second place among the worthies of David, and his end might have been very different." Kitto, *Bible Illustr.* p. 324.

10. *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] Over the whole land of Israel. See note on 1 Sam. iii. 20.

12—21. Abner's negotiations with David.

12. *on his behalf*] The Sept. rendering *immediately* is adopted by some commentators, but is unsupported by the use of the word elsewhere.

Whose is the land] The meaning may be either (*a*) "Is not the land thine by virtue of God's promise?" or (*b*) "Is not the land in my power so that I can make whom I please king?" But the latter agrees best with the words which follow: "Make thy covenant *with me*," and with Abner's character and evident desire to lay stress on his own power, in order to secure favourable terms for himself. There is however some doubt about the text, which was corrupt in the copy from which the Sept. version was made, and possibly the words *Whose is the land? saying also* should be struck out. The Targum has a curious paraphrase, "I swear by Him Who made the earth."

13. *except thou first bring*] As the text stands it can only be rendered *except on condition of thy bringing*. But it looks like a combination of two readings, *except thou bring* (so the LXX.) and *before thou bring* (Vulg.).

David's reasons for demanding the restoration of Michal were probably (*a*) genuine affection for the wife of his youth who had saved his life (1 Sam. xviii. 20, xix. 11 ff.); (*b*) a desire to efface the slight put upon

14 see my face. And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth
Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I
espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.
15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even*
16 from Phaltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with
her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Ab-
17 ner unto him, Go, return. And he returned. And Abner
had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye
18 sought for David in times past to be king over you: now

him by the deprivation; (*c*) a wish to conciliate the good will of the northern tribes by an alliance with Saul's family.

14. *David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth*] The acceptance of the condition by Abner is implied, but the formal demand was made from Ish-bosheth, who was powerless to resist the will of his master. Thus the restoration of Michal took place openly as a public act of justice; it clearly exhibited the strength of David and the weakness of Ish-bosheth; it gave Abner opportunity to go to Hebron as Michal's escort, and mature his plans for deposing Ish-bosheth.

which I espoused, &c.] Saul proposed the slaughter of an hundred Philistines as the price of Michal's hand in lieu of dowry: David paid him double (1 Sam. xviii. 25, 27).

15. *Phaltiel*] Called *Phalti* in 1 Sam. xxv. 44, where his marriage with Michal is recorded.

16. *Bahurim*] A village mentioned again only in connexion with David's flight from Jerusalem as the residence of Shimei (ch. xvi. 5), and the place where Jonathan and Ahimaaz hid themselves (ch. xvii. 18). It belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and was on the road from Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives to the Jordan fords. A Jewish tradition in the Targum identifies it with Almon (Josh. xxi. 18), now *Almît*, about 4 miles N.E. of Jerusalem, and a mile beyond Anathoth (*Anâta*). According to this view, which is adopted by Lieut. Conder, it was not on the main road through Bethany, but on a road which leads across the saddle north of the principal summit of the Mount of Olives.

17. *And Abner had communication*] Better, **Now Abner had had communication**, previously to the occurrence related in *vv.* 15, 16. The journey of *v.* 16 to escort Michal terminates in the visit to Hebron of *v.* 20.

with the elders of Israel] The authorities of the northern tribes as distinct from Judah. The elders were consulted as the representatives of the people. Cp. 1 Sam. viii. 4, where see note on their various functions.

Ye sought for David, &c.] It appears from this that there had been from the first even among the northern tribes a party favourable to David, whose opposition had only been overcome by Abner's strong will and vigorous efforts. This agrees with what we should naturally

then do *it:* for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner also spake in the ears of 19
Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed *good* to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner 20
came to David *to* Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will 21
gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22—27. *Abner treacherously murdered by Joab.*

And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from 22

expect from the account of his popularity during Saul's reign (1 Sam. xviii. 5).

18. *I will save my people*] The commission which had been given to Saul (1 Sam. ix. 16) was transferred to David. Again we have an intimation that prophetic utterances respecting David's divine appointment to the throne were commonly known.

19. *And Abner also spake*, &c.] **And Abner also had spoken**, &c. Beside the general communication with the elders of Israel a special and confidential negotiation had been entered into with the tribe of Benjamin, which was the most likely to offer opposition through fear of losing dignity and advantage by the transference of the royal house to the tribe of Judah.

all that seemed good to Israel] Their readiness to acknowledge David as king, as well as conditions and demands which they wished to make, for there was to be a "covenant" between him and the people (*v.* 21).

20. *twenty men with him*] They formed the official escort sent by Ish-bosheth to convey Michal back to David, but were in all probability privy to the secret purpose of Abner's visit.

21. *and will gather all Israel*] A meeting of the national assembly or "congregation of Israel" was requisite to accept David as king. Cp. ch. v. 1, and see note on 1 Sam. x. 17.

Abner] Observe the emphatic way in which Abner's name is repeated in *vv.* 17—21, and not merely represented by pronouns. It concentrates attention on the personality of this man who treats as the agent for the transfer of a kingdom which his own energy has consolidated.

pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had
23 sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he
24 hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him
25 away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou
26 doest. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the
27 well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. And when Abner was returned *to* Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there *under* the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

22—27. Abner treacherously murdered by Joab.

22. *from* pursuing *a troop*] Lit. *from the troop*, i.e. **from the foray**, or plundering expedition on which they had gone to procure supplies. In the absence of taxes and regular pay, it was the only means of supporting an army. Comp. David's practice at Ziklag (1 Sam. xxvii. 8 ff.).

23. *When Joab*, &c.] Probably Abner had intentionally chosen a time for his visit, when he knew that Joab was absent from Hebron.

24. *he is quite gone*] The Sept. reads "and he is gone in peace? Dost thou not know the wickedness of Abner," &c.

25. *thy going out and thy coming in*] All thy movements and undertakings. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 6; Ps. cxxi. 8; Is. xxxvii. 28.

26. *he sent messengers after Abner*] No doubt in David's name, pretending to recall him for a further interview. A message from Joab would have excited Abner's suspicion, while on David's good faith he could place entire reliance.

the well of Sirah] Rather more than a mile out of Hebron on the old paved road to the north is a spring with a reservoir called *Ain Sareh*, which is in all probability "the well of Sirah." This agrees sufficiently well with Josephus' statement that it was twenty stadia or two miles and a half distant from Hebron.

27. *in the gate*] Lit. *into the midst of the gate*, the space between the inner and outer gateways. But the publicity of the city gate was unsuited to a private conference, and the Sept. offers a more probable reading, "took him apart by the side of the gate."

under the fifth rib] **In the belly.** See note on ii. 23.

for the blood of Asahel his brother] Since Abner had slain Asahel in

28—30. *The Curse of Blood-guiltiness.*

And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my 28
kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the
blood of Abner the son of Ner: let it rest on the head of 29
Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail
from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a
leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword,
or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother 30

self-defence (ch. ii. 23), Joab's act was not justifiable on the score of blood-revenge. This was merely a convenient pretext for getting rid of a dangerous rival. He foresaw that if he allowed Abner to have the credit of placing the crown of Israel on David's head, he would lose his own position and influence. Failing in his endeavour to persuade David that Abner was playing him false, with characteristic unscrupulousness he planned this deliberate and treacherous murder, as on a later occasion he murdered his rival Amasa (ch. xx. 10).

28—30. THE CURSE OF BLOOD-GUILTINESS.

28. *I and my kingdom are guiltless*] With a strong asseveration David asserts his entire innocence of any complicity in this murder. Neither upon himself personally nor upon "his kingdom," i.e. the royal house, his descendants and successors, could punishment for shedding this innocent blood justly fall. Cp. 1 Kings ii. 31—33. For the doctrine of a divine judgment which was certain to fall upon the murderer and his posterity, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," see Gen. iv. 11; Deut. xxi. 6—9; Matt. xxiii. 35. Compare the Greek belief in the avenging Furies who dogged the murderer's steps.

29. *let it rest*] **Let it fall.** The Heb. word is a forcible one, expressing the energy of David's indignation. It is used in Jer. xxiii. 19, xxx. 23, of the whirlwind of God's wrath falling upon the head of the wicked.

one that hath an issue, or that is a leper] Pining away miserably with incurable diseases, which not only made life a burden, but rendered their victim ceremonially unclean, and excluded him from the congregation of the Lord (Lev. xiii. 46).

that leaneth on a staff] A cripple, lame, or blind. The word translated *staff* means elsewhere *distaff* (Prov. xxxi. 19), and the phrase may also be rendered as it is in the Vulgate "distaff holder" (*tenens fusum*). This would signify 'a weak, effeminate man, unfit for war,' as "Hercules with the distaff" was the type of unmanly feebleness among the Greeks. But this explanation seems forced, and the E. V. is supported by the Sept. and Targum.

that falleth on the sword] Render, "**by** the sword." The E. V. suggests the idea of *suicide*, but untimely death in battle or by the hand of an assassin is meant.

slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31—39. *David's lamentation for Abner.*

31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rent your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed
32 the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lift up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and
33 all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said,

Died Abner as a fool dieth?
34 Thy hands *were* not bound,
Nor thy feet put into fetters:
As *a man* falleth before wicked men, *so* fellest thou.
35 And all the people wept again over him. And when all

30. *slew ... slain*] **Murdered Abner, because he had slain,** &c. The words in the Heb. are different, and the first denotes the violent character of the act. The Sept. however gives another reading, "Now Joab and Abishai *were lying in wait for* Abner, because &c."

31—39. David's lamentation for Abner.

31. *gird you with sackcloth*] The practice of wearing garments of the coarse dark hair-cloth used for making sacks as a sign of mourning was very ancient (Gen. xxxvii. 34). In cases of extreme grief or humiliation they were worn next the skin, but ordinarily outside the usual tunic.

mourn before Abner] Preceding the bier in the funeral procession.

33. *lamented*] See note on ch. i. 17.

Died Abner as a fool dieth] Lit. **As dies a fool should Abner die?** Was this ignoble death, befitting a fool, to be the fate of so brave a warrior?

34. *Thy hands*, &c.] Two explanations of these words seem possible; either (1) Thou hadst not committed any crime to deserve a malefactor's punishment, but wast causelessly murdered by treacherous enemies: or (2) How was it that thou wast slain while thy hands were at liberty to defend thyself, thy feet free to escape by flight? It was because thou wast attacked unsuspectingly by treacherous enemies. In the first case "fool" in *v.* 33 is equivalent to "miscreant." It is a term which frequently in the O.T. implies moral worthlessness, wickedness. Cp. Ps. xiv. 1. The Targum here renders it "the wicked." In the second case it means "an ignoble churl who cannot defend himself."

the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as 36
whatsoever the king did, pleased all the people. For all the 37
people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said 38
unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great *man* fallen this day in Israel? And I *am this* day 39
weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

CH. IV. 1—7. *The Murder of Ish-bosheth.*

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in He- 4

35. *to cause David to eat meat*] Fasting was the usual accompaniment of mourning. To shew his grief and his respect for Abner David refused to eat until sunset, the regular time for terminating a fast. Cp. ch. i. 12.

meat] Lit. bread. In Biblical English the word denotes *food* in general, and is never restricted to its modern meaning *flesh*.

37. *all the people and all Israel*] Not only David's own subjects in Judah, but the people of the northern kingdom, who must have been specially aggrieved by the murder of their hero, recognised the sincerity of David's grief, and acquitted him of all complicity in the act. If, as seems probable (*v.* 26), Joab had abused the king's authority in order to bring Abner back, it was doubly necessary for David emphatically to repudiate the act, lest he should have been thought to have had some part in instigating it.

38, 39. To his confidential servants David speaks his whole mind freely. He feels that some apology is needed for leaving the authors of this heinous crime unpunished. As an excuse for doing so he pleads his youth and weakness. Though he had been anointed king, his kingdom was as yet far from being securely established. He could not dispense with his warlike nephews' help. He dared not order the execution of his best general. Probably the army would have interfered to prevent it. But he protests against their hardness and cruelty, and declares that Joab will not escape the divine judgment for his crime. "It was one of those moments in which a king, even with the best intentions, must feel to his own heavy cost the weakness of everything human and the limits of human supremacy." Ewald, *Hist of Israel*, III. 117.

weak] The same epithet is applied to Solomon in 1 Chr. xxix. 1, and to Rehoboam in 2 Chr. xiii. 7 (E. V. *tender*).

bron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were
2 troubled. And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains
of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name
of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of
the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned
3 to Benjamin: and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were
4 sojourners there until this day.) And Jonathan, Saul's son,
had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet, *and* was five years old
when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel,

Ch. IV. 1—7. The Murder of Ish-bosheth.

1. *his hands were feeble*] **His hands were weakened.** His resolution was paralysed: he lost heart. Cp. Ezra iv. 4, and the opposite expression in ch. ii. 7.

were troubled] **Were dismayed.** Ish-bosheth was a mere puppet, and Abner the real stay of the kingdom.

2. *captains of bands*] Leaders of predatory troops. See note on ch. iii. 22.

of the children of Benjamin] The historian calls special attention to the fact that Ish-bosheth's murderers belonged to his own tribe.

for Beeroth also, &c.] The object of this parenthesis is to explain how these Beerothites came to be Benjamites. Beeroth was one of the four Gibeonite cities, retained by their original Canaanite inhabitants in virtue of the treaty made with Joshua (Josh. ix. 17). It was however reckoned to belong to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), and had been occupied by Benjamites when its original inhabitants deserted it. When and why they did so is unknown, but it has been plausibly conjectured that they fled from Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2).

The site of Beeroth (=*wells*) is probably marked by the modern village of *El-Bireh* (=*the well*), about 9 miles N. of Jerusalem. "It is remarkable as the first halting-place of caravans on the northern road from Jerusalem, and therefore not improbably the scene of the event to which its monastic tradition lays claim—the place where the parents of Jesus sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found him not, turned back again to Jerusalem." Stanley, *Sinai and Pal.* p. 213.

3. *Gittaim*] A Benjamite town of this name is mentioned in Neh. xi. 33, but if the reason suggested above for the flight of the Beerothites is the correct one, it can hardly be the same, as they would have chosen a more distant refuge. The name is the dual form of Gath, meaning "two wine-presses," which suggests that it may possibly have been in Philistia.

4. *And Jonathan*, &c.] Before proceeding to narrate the murder of Ish-bosheth, the historian inserts a remark which implies that with his death the cause of Saul's house would necessarily become hopeless, as its only other legitimate representative was a lame child of twelve years old

and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth. And the sons of Rim- 5
mon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. And they came thither into the midst 6

out of Jezreel] Where the Israelite camp was pitched before the fatal battle of Gilboa. See note on 1 Sam. xxix. 1.

Mephibosheth] Called in 1 Chr. viii. 34, ix. 40, *Merib-baal. Bosheth* (="shame") has been substituted for the detested name of Baal, as in the name Ish-bosheth for Esh-baal. See note on ch. ii. 8. *Merib-baal* means "one who contends with Baal:" *Mephibosheth*, "exterminator of shame." For his subsequent history see chaps. ix., xvi., xix. 24 ff.

5. *to the house of Ish-bosheth*] At Mahanaim (ch. ii. 8).

who lay on a bed at noon] Or, **as he was taking his midday sleep**, or *siesta*, according to the usual custom of hot countries. They chose an hour when Ish-bosheth would be alone and defenceless.

6. *And they came*, &c.] An explanation how it was possible for Rechab and Baanah to enter Ish-bosheth's house unsuspected. They came, as they may have been accustomed to do, to procure wheat for their men from the king's granary.

The Heb. however may be otherwise rendered, "And hither [some MSS. read "and behold"] there came wheat-fetchers into the midst of the house:" men whose business it was to draw the rations of wheat from the granary. If this is the right rendering, the meaning is that the murderers obtained entrance to the house by going in their company.

v. 7 appears at first sight to be a somewhat awkward repetition of *v.* 6. But it is a peculiar feature of Hebrew historical writing to give a general account of a fact first, and then to repeat it with additional details. The murderers' entrance into the house, their deed, and their escape are first briefly related: then the fact of their entrance is repeated as an introduction to the fuller details of the scene and manner of the murder, and the route by which the assassins escaped. Compare the double mention of Joab's return to Hebron in ch. iii. 22, 23; and of the national assembly at Hebron in ch. v. 1, 3; and note on ch. xiii. 38.

The Sept. however has the following entirely different reading, which is found also in some MSS. of the Vulgate in addition to the rendering of the present Heb. text, but apparently was not retained by Jerome himself. "And behold the portress of the house was cleaning wheat, and she slumbered and slept; and the brothers Rechab and Baanah came unobserved into the house. Now Ish-bosheth was sleeping on the bed in his chamber: and they smote him," &c. This also explains how the murderers entered unobserved. The female slave who watched the door (ἡ θυρωρός, cp. John xviii. 16, Acts xii. 13) had fallen asleep over her task of sifting[1] or picking the wheat, and there was no one to give the

[1] Cp. Amos ix. 9. An illustration of a Bethlehem woman sifting wheat is given in Neil's *Palestine Explored*, p. 246. He says that it is a process constantly going on and forming a marked feature of Palestine life.

of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib:* and Rechab and
7 Baanah his brother escaped. For when they came *into* the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8—12. *The Punishment of the Murderers by David.*

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David *to* Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and
9 of his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out
10 of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have
11 given him a reward for *his* tidings: how much more, when

alarm. This reading gives a clear straightforward narrative, and certainly seems preferable to the repetitions of the present Hebrew text.

under the fifth rib] **In the belly.** See note on ch. ii. 23.

7. *through the plain*] **By the way of the Arabah.** See note on ch. ii. 29. From Mahanaim to Hebron was a distance of about 80 or 90 miles.

8—12. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE MURDERERS BY DAVID.

8. *to the king*] Observe that Ish-bosheth is never honoured with the title of *king*.

thine enemy, which sought thy life] These words are to be referred to Saul not to Ish-bosheth. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, xxv. 29.

the LORD *hath avenged*] The murderers profanely represented themselves as the instruments of Providence. "They pretended piety and loyalty, but they regarded nothing except their own interest." Wordsworth.

9. *who hath redeemed*, &c.] Compare the same oath in David's mouth in 1 Kings i. 29. In this connexion it implies that one who was under God's protection had no need to commit crimes for his own defence.

10. *when one told me*, &c.] The Amalekite who pretended to have slain Saul (ch. i. 2 ff.).

slew him...who thought *that I would have given him*] Or, **slew him ...to give him a reward**, &c. In this case the expression is bitterly

wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? And David commanded *his* young men, and they slew 12
them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

CH. V. 1—5. *David anointed king over all Israel.*

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, 5

ironical. 'He expected a reward, and I gave it him; but it was the reward of death.'

11. *a righteous person*] "A man who had done no one any harm," as Josephus says. His merits seem to have been negative rather than positive.

require his blood] Demand satisfaction for his murder. God is said to "require blood," i. e. to avenge murder (Gen. ix. 5; Ps. ix. 12), and in punishing the murderers David acted as His representative.

take you away from the earth] Rather, **put you away out of the land.** The word is one specially used of removing evil or the guilt of evil from the land (Deut. xix. 13, 19, &c.). The guilt of murder defiled the land until expiated by the execution of the murderer (Num. xxxv. 33).

12. *And David commanded*, &c.] Kitto compares the conduct of David towards the murderers of his rival with that of Alexander the Great towards Bessus, who murdered Darius, and of Caesar towards the murderers of Pompey. It may be questioned whether they were actuated by higher motives than "the traditional policy of rulers, who thus provide that they shall be protected for the present, and afterwards avenged" (Tac. *Hist.* I. 44), but David's indignation was doubtless sincere.

cut off their hands and their feet] The hands which had been stretched out against their master, the feet which had been "swift to shed blood" and to seek reward, were exposed to view in the most public and frequented spot in Hebron, for a spectacle and a warning. Cp. Deut. xxi. 22. We may compare the practice, formerly in vogue in this country, of exposing the heads and limbs of traitors on the city gates.

over the pool] Possibly one of the two great reservoirs, "doubtless of high antiquity," which are still to be seen at Hebron. See Robinson's *Bibl. Res.* II. 74.

CH. V. **1—5.** DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER ALL ISRAEL.
vv. 1—3 = 1 Chr. xi. 1—3.

1. *Then came*, &c.] It is probable that no long interval elapsed between the death of Ish-bosheth and the election of David. "The

and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.
2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast
he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD
said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou
3 shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel
came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a
league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they

consummation to which events in God's Providence had been leading was now come. Saul and Jonathan, Abner and Ish-bosheth, were all dead; there was no one of the house of Saul capable of taking the lead; David was already head of a very large portion of Israel; the Philistines, and perhaps the remnants of the Canaanites, were restless and threatening; and it was obviously the interest of the Israelitish nation to unite themselves under the sovereignty of the valiant and virtuous son of Jesse, their former deliverer, and the man designated by the word of God as their Captain and Shepherd." *Speaker's Comm.*

all the tribes of Israel] The 'congregation of Israel,' or national assembly composed of all the warriors of the nation above the age of twenty who chose to come, met to elect David king. See note on 1 Sam. x. 17.

we are thy bone and thy flesh] An expression denoting close relationship in virtue of common descent. Cp. Gen. xxix. 14; Jud. ix. 2.

Three reasons, arranged in the order of their importance, are given for electing David king: the tie of relationship: his proved capacity as a military leader: the divine choice. The first and third correspond to the precept of Deut. xvii. 15: with the second compare ch. iii. 18.

2. *thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel*] David had won the good-will of the people as their leader in war. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 13, 16.

the LORD *said to thee*] See note on ch. iii. 9.

Thou shalt feed] Lit. "thou shalt *shepherd*" (LXX. ποιμανεῖς): a natural metaphor to express the ruler's care for his people. It is used by Greek poets, e.g. Homer, whose regular title for Agamemnon is ποιμὴν λαῶν, "shepherd of the peoples." But it was especially appropriate in the case of David, who was taken from the sheepfolds of Bethlehem to be the shepherd of Israel (Ps. lxxviii. 70—72), as the fishers of the Galilean lake were called to become "fishers of men" (Matt. iv. 19), and (except perhaps in Gen. xlix. 24) it does not appear to be used in the O.T. before his time.

captain] The title given to Saul in 1 Sam. ix. 16, &c., and to David in 1 Sam. xxv. 30 (E.V. *ruler*).

3. *all the elders of Israel*] From *v.* 1 and 1 Chr. xii. 23—40 it is evident that a general assembly of the nation, and not merely a few delegates, met at Hebron: here the *elders* are particularly specified because they acted as the representatives of the people in negotiating with David. See note on 1 Sam. viii. 4, and cp. ch. iii. 17.

made a league with them] Cp. ch. iii. 21. This 'league' was probably

anointed David king over Israel. David *was* thirty years 4
old when he *began* to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. In 5
Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months.
and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all
Israel and Judah.

6—10. *The Capture of Jebus.*

And the king and his men went *to* Jerusalem unto the 6

a solemn contract in which the king on the one hand engaged to rule according to the laws, and the people on the other hand promised him their allegiance. Some kind of a charter, defining the king's rights, was in existence (1 Sam. x. 25): and later on we find the people demanding some limitation of these rights (1 Kings xii. 3 ff). The Israelite monarchy was not an absolute and irresponsible despotism.

before the LORD] The covenant was made as a solemn religious ceremony, in the presence of the supreme King of Israel, whose vicegerent David was. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 15.

they anointed David king] For the third time. See note on ch. ii. 4. In Chronicles is added "according to the word of the LORD by Samuel."

The book of Chronicles contains further interesting details about this assembly at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 23–40). The numbers of fighting men sent by each tribe are preserved, amounting to a total of nearly 350,000. Stress is laid on the unanimity of feeling, and the general rejoicing with which David's anointing was celebrated in a three days' festival.

4, 5. The compiler of Chronicles omits these verses here, but inserts the substance of them in 1 Chron. xxix. 27.

4. *thirty years old*] The prime of life: the age at which the Levites entered upon their duties (Num. iv. 3): at which young men commenced to take part in public business in Greece: at which Joseph was made ruler over Egypt (Gen. xli. 46): at which Jesus Christ was "anointed with the Holy Ghost" in His Baptism, and began His public ministry (Lk. iii. 23).

6—10. THE CAPTURE OF JEBUS.
= 1 Chr. xi. 4—9.

6. *to Jerusalem*, &c.] The Chronicler paraphrases the text thus, "to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land." Writing after the Captivity, he felt it necessary to explain how the Jebusites came to be dwelling in Jerusalem by a reference to its ancient name of Jebus.

It is not a little remarkable that the metropolis of the Jewish monarchy, the most sacred city in the world, does not take its place in the history of the nation until a comparatively late period.

Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David can-
7 not come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong
8 hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and

As the capital of the important Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites, it bore the name of *Jebus*. It was assigned to Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 28), but, lying on the border, was first attacked by Judah (Jud. i. 8), and afterwards by Benjamin (Jud. i. 21). The citadel was either never taken, or soon recovered, for the Jebusites retained joint possession of the city along with the children of Judah and Benjamin through the period of the Judges and down to this time (Josh. xv. 63; Jud. i. 21).

Political, civil, and military considerations pointed to Jerusalem as the most suitable capital for the united kingdom.

(*a*) Its position within the territory of Benjamin yet close upon the borders of Judah (or, as some think, and as may be indicated by the passages quoted above, partly in one tribe, partly in the other), was excellently adapted for binding together the two royal tribes, and conciliating the good-will of Benjamin, without alienating Judah.

(*b*) Its situation was virtually central, not only with regard to these two great tribes, but for the whole land. "It was on the ridge of the backbone of hills, which extend through the whole country from the Desert to the plain of Esdraelon. Every traveller who has trod the central route of Palestine from north to south, must have passed through the table-land of Jerusalem." Stanley's *Sinai and Pal.* p. 176.

(*c*) As a military post it was unrivalled. It stood on a rocky plateau surrounded on three sides by deep ravines forming a natural fortress of almost impregnable strength.

On the topography of Jerusalem see Additional Note VI. p. 239.

Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither] Render, **Thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame would repel thee; as much as to say, David, &c.** So confident were the Jebusites in the strength of their fortress, that they boasted that a garrison of blind and lame men would be sufficient to defend it.

This boast is omitted in Chron., probably as being obscure, and not bearing directly upon the facts of the narrative.

7. *Nevertheless*] Heb. simply, **And.**

the strong hold of Zion] See Additional Note VI. p. 239.

8. *Whosoever*, &c.] An obscure and probably corrupt passage. The E.V., which transposes the first two clauses and introduces an apodosis from Chronicles, cannot be defended. The most probable explanations, neither of them however free from serious objections, are:

(1) **Whosoever smiteth the Jebusite,**
let him hurl down the precipice

smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain.* Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the 9
city of David. And David built round about from Millo

both the lame and the blind,
hated of David's soul.

David bids his men give no quarter, taking up the words of the Jebusites, and in derision calling their garrison "blind and lame."

(2) **Whosoever smiteth the Jebusite,**
let him reach the watercourse,
[and smite] both the lame and the blind,
hated of David's soul.

According to this rendering there is a reference to the way in which the citadel, supposed by its defenders to be inaccessible, was to be scaled, either by some waterworn gully in the rock, or through a subterranean channel which had been constructed to supply the fortress with water.

The author of the book of Chronicles either had a different text in his original authority, or, more probably, omitted an expression which was already obscure. He gives the passage thus: "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief."

The Sept. reads; "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusite, let him slay with the sword both the lame and the blind who hate David's soul." The Vulg. gives a mere paraphrase: "For David had offered a reward on that day to the man who should smite the Jebusite, and reach the water-pipes of the houses, and remove the blind and lame who hated David's soul."

Wherefore they said] **Wherefore they are wont to say:** the regular phrase for introducing a *proverb*. Cp. 1 Sam. xix. 24.

The blind, &c.] This is understood by the Sept., which reads "into the house of the Lord," and by the Vulgate, which renders "into the Temple," to mean that the blind and lame were excluded from the Temple. But this does not seem to have been the case, although they were forbidden to minister (Lev. xxi. 18). The explanation that it was a proverb applied to obnoxious persons, meaning "We will not have disagreeable persons in the house," does not take account of the origin of the saying. Probably it should be rendered as a kind of exclamation: "Blind and lame! he cannot come into the house!" i. e. the blind and the lame are sufficient to defend the fortress: he (the assailant) cannot enter into it.

9. *in the fort*] **In the strong hold**, the same word as in *v.* 7, and in 1 Chr. xi. 5 (E.V. castle).

Millo] **The Millo.** See Additional Note VI., p. 241.

10 and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

11—16. *David's Palace and Family.*

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and

and inward] Within or under the protection of the Millo, which was the outermost defence of the city.

Chron. adds "And Joab repaired the rest of the city."

10. *And David went on, and grew great*] = "So David waxed greater and greater" in Chron. The E.V. obliterates the identity of the Hebrew. See Introd. p. 22, *note* 1.

the LORD *God of hosts*] See Additional Note 1. to 1 Samuel, p. 235.

11—16. DAVID'S PALACE AND FAMILY.
= 1 Chr. xiv. 1—7.

11. *Hiram king of Tyre*] In 1 Kings v. 10, 18, the name is spelt *Hirom*, in Chron. *Huram*.

Josephus (against Apion i. 18) states, on the authority of Menander of Ephesus, who wrote a history of Tyre based upon native Tyrian documents, that Hiram, Solomon's ally and helper in building the Temple, reigned thirty-four years. He also states that Solomon began the Temple in the twelfth year of Hiram's reign. This Hiram therefore reigned only eight years contemporaneously with David, as the Temple was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign.

But David's palace must have been built before the last eight years of his reign. From ch. vii. 2 we learn that it was finished before he conceived the plan of building the Temple, at a time when Solomon was not yet born (ch. vii. 12: cp. 1 Chr. xxii. 9), and probably some twenty-five years before the close of his reign.

If the statements of Menander and Josephus are accurate, we must suppose that the Hiram here mentioned was either the father or the grandfather of Solomon's ally. His father is called by Menander *Abibaal*, but he may have borne both names, or the more familiar name of his son may have been attached to him.

It is probable that the historian to some extent forsakes chronological order, and places the account of David's palace-building and of his family here by anticipation in proof of the statement of *v.* 10. He must have been too fully occupied at the beginning of his reign with the works mentioned in *v.* 9, and with wars such as those against the Philistines (*vv.* 17—25), to have had leisure for the luxury of palace-building.

Tyre] One of the two great cities of Phoenicia, celebrated for its commerce, its mechanical skill, and its wealth. When the Israelites entered Canaan, it was already noted for its strength (Josh. xix. 29). Three causes co-operated to bring Phoenicia into close and friendly relation with Israel. (*a*) The contiguity of the countries, and the short distance between their capitals. From Tyre to Jerusalem by land was scarcely more than 100 miles, so that intercourse was easy. (*b*)

cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David a house. And David perceived that the LORD had 12
established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

And David took *him* mo concubines and wives out of 13
Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. And these *be* 14
the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem;

Similarity of language. Phoenician so closely resembles Hebrew, that it must have been readily intelligible to the Israelites. (*c*) Tyre depended upon Palestine for its supplies of wheat and oil, and in return sent to Jerusalem its articles of commerce, and provided skilled workmen for the buildings erected by David and Solomon.

cedar trees] Felled no doubt in the forests of Lebanon, and brought by sea to Joppa. Cp. 2 Chron. ii. 16. The cedar was the prince of trees (Ps. civ. 16), the emblem of strength and stature and grandeur (Ps. xcii. 12; Am. ii. 9; Ezek. xxxi. 3). Its timber was highly prized for building on account of its durability. Other species of pine besides the well-known cedar of Lebanon were probably included under the general term *cedar*.

they built David a house] Psalm xxx., which is entitled "A song at the Dedication of the House," may possibly have been written to celebrate the completion of this palace. If so, David had just recovered from a severe illness, concerning which the history is silent.

12. *And David perceived*, &c.] The friendly co-operation of so powerful a king as Hiram, and the success of his enterprises in general, were unmistakeable proofs of divine favour.

13. *took him mo concubines and wives*] In accordance with the general custom of Oriental monarchs. The law of the king in Deut. xvii. 17 imposes some limitation on the practice. See note on ch. iii. 5.

Mo as the comparative of *many* is an archaism which has disappeared from modern editions of the Bible. It occurs frequently in Shakespeare, e.g. *Richard II.*, A. II. S. I. 239, "Many *moe* of noble blood."

14. *And these*, &c.] The list of David's sons is given again in 1 Chr. iii. 5—8, as well as in 1 Chr. xiv. 4—7. The first four were sons of Bathsheba, and as Solomon is always placed last it is natural to suppose that he was the youngest. See note on ch. xii. 24. Josephus distinctly calls him David's youngest son (*Ant.* VII. 14, 2). In 1 Chr. iii. Shammua is called *Shimea*, and Elishua appears as *Elishama*, probably by a scribe's error. Both lists in Chron. insert two more names, *Eliphalet* or *Elpalet* and *Nogah*. It is possible that they are omitted here because they died in infancy, and that the second Eliphalet was named after his dead brother. *Beeliada* in 1 Chr. xiv. is another form for *Eliada* compounded with *Baal*=lord instead of *El*=God.

Nothing is known of any of these sons except Solomon and Nathan.

15 Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, Ibhar
16 also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.

17—25. *Two victories over the Philistines.*

17 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold.
18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the
19 valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD,

It was through the latter that Joseph traced his lineal descent from David, according to the genealogy of our Lord given by St Luke (iii. 31).

17—25. TWO VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES. = 1 Chr. xiv. 8—16.

17. *But when the Philistines heard*] This Philistine invasion probably followed soon after the capture of Jebus. The Philistines were alarmed by the union of the Israelites under a king of proved vigour, who had inaugurated his reign by a brilliant military achievement. They therefore mustered their whole force (cp. 1 Sam. xxix. 1), for a strenuous effort to crush him.

came up] From the plains of Philistia to the highlands of Judah.

went down to the hold] The word translated "hold" is the same as that translated "stronghold" in *v.* 7, and "fort" in *v.* 9. But as David "went down" to it, and "went up" from it into the valley of Rephaim (*v.* 19), it cannot here mean the citadel of Zion. Most probably David wished to drive the Philistines back, and prevent them from plundering his country, and marched down with his forces to his old post at Adullam. The term "stronghold" is used of Adullam in ch. xxiii. 14, and the incident there related may have happened in this war. It was a strong position in the valley of Elah, one of the most likely routes for an invading army from Philistia to take. See notes on 1 Sam. xvii. 1, xxii. 1. This view agrees with the general statement in 1 Chron. that "he went out against them."

18. *The Philistines also came*] **But the Philistines came.** Taking a different route, perhaps by the *Wady-es-Surâr* and Beth-shemesh (see note on 1 Sam. vi. 9), so as to avoid David and his army, they came up and occupied "the valley of Rephaim," an open plain or upland valley, stretching in a S.W. direction from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem towards Bethlehem. Cp. Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16 (E. V. *the valley of the giants*). It was famous for its fertile corn-fields (Is. xvii. 5). The name preserves a trace of the ancient gigantic race of the Rephaim, to which Og the king of Bashan belonged (Deut. iii. 11. Cp. Gen. xiv. 5; Josh. xvii. 15).

19. *inquired of the* LORD] Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 2, and note on ch. ii. 1.

saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote 20
them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And 21
there they left their images, and David and his men burnt them. And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread 22
themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David 23
inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; *but* fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou 24

20. *as the breach of waters*] Isaiah calls the scene of the battle "*mount* Perazim" (xxviii. 21). David, we may suppose, occupied the hill, and swept down from it upon the Philistines in the plain below, scattering them irresistibly as a mountain torrent swollen by a sudden storm sweeps all before it and bursts through every obstacle in its way.

Baal-perazim] *Baal=owner* or *possessor*, so that the name signifies "Place of breaches."

21. *their images*] Cp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 9 (E. V. *idols*). They brought them into the field to ensure victory, as the Edomites appear to have done (2 Chr. xxv. 14), and as the Israelites brought out the Ark (1 Sam. iv. 3).

burnt them] Render, **took them away**, as spoil, perhaps to display in his triumphal procession. According to 1 Chr. xiv. 12 he afterwards burnt them, in compliance with the law of Deut. vii. 5, 25. The E. V. here "burned them" is a gloss, adopted from the Targum and the passage in 1 Chr. Thus the old disgrace of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines was avenged.

23. *Thou shalt not go up*] The addition of the Sept. "*to meet them*" is needed to complete the sense. This answer implies the same question as in *v.* 19.

fetch a compass behind them] Go round to their rear. "Compass" in old English means "circuit;" and "to fetch a compass" means "to make a circuit or detour," "to go round."

In Chron. the same manœuvre is described in different words: "Go not after them: turn away from them and come upon them," &c.

mulberry trees] So the Jewish commentators explain the word *bâcâ* which is found only here and in the parallel passage of Chronicles. Probably however a tree called *bâcâ* by the Arabs, resembling the balsam shrub, is meant. The name is derived from *bâcâh*, "to weep," from the tear-like sap which exudes when a leaf is torn off. "The valley of Baca" (Ps. lxxxiv. 6) may have been named from these trees,

hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, *that* then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philis-
25 tines. And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come *to* Gazer.

and the Psalmist refers to it with a play upon its etymological significance, "valley of weeping."

24. *the sound of a going*] **The sound of marching.** The cognate verb is used of Jehovah "marching" (so to speak) before His people in Jud. v. 4; Ps. lxviii. 7; Hab. iii. 12. A rustling in the tops of the trees like the marching of an army was to be the signal that Jehovah Himself would lead David's army to victory. Cp. 2 Kings vii. 6.

bestir thyself] In Chron. less forcibly "go out to battle."

then shall the LORD *go out before thee*] The use of the perfect tense in the original gives an emphasis to the assurance. "Then **hath Jehovah gone forth** before thee." The E. V. renders it rightly in Chron.

25. *from Geba*] The Sept. and Chron., as well as Is. xxviii. 21, which almost certainly refers to this miraculous defeat of the Philistines, all read **Gibeon.** This seems to be the true reading. Geba (see note on 1 Sam. x. 5) was too far to the east: Gibeon (see note on ch. ii. 12) was on the natural line of retreat northwards from the valley of Rephaim to Gezer.

Gazer] Rather, **Gezer,** a royal city of the Canaanites (Josh. xii. 12), belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, and assigned to the Kohathite Levites (Josh. xxi. 21). Its Canaanite inhabitants retained possession of it until the time of Solomon, when Pharaoh took it and presented it to his daughter, Solomon's queen (1 Kings ix. 16). It lay between the lower Beth-horon and the sea (Josh. xvi. 3), and the name appears to survive in *Tell Jezar*, a hill about 10 miles W.S.W. of Beth-horon, and six miles E. of *Akir* (Ekron). M. Clermont Ganneau found there two inscriptions in Hebrew character, which he reads "Boundary of Gezer." Conder's *Tent Work*, I. 13. The Philistines were thus driven right back into their own lowland plain.

The Chronicler concludes the account of these victories with the words: "And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations."

CHAP. VI. 1—23. THE TRANSLATION OF THE ARK TO MOUNT ZION.

= 1 Chr. xiii., xv., xvi.

This chapter records an important episode in David's reign. After restoring the political unity of the nation, and consolidating it by the establishment of his new capital, his next care was to make that capital the centre of the national worship. With this object he prepared to

CH. VI. 1—23. *The Translation of the Ark to Mount Zion.*

1—11. *Removal of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim. Uzzah smitten for his irreverence.*

Again, David gathered together all the chosen *men* of 6
Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with 2
all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to

convey thither the Ark, which had been left neglected at Kirjath-jearim since its return from Philistia (1 Chr. xiii. 3). But why did he not also bring the Tabernacle into Jerusalem, and place the Ark in it? The reason is perhaps to be found in the double high-priesthood which had arisen during the latter years of Saul's reign. Abiathar officiated in David's camp: Zadok, it would seem, ministered at Gibeon, whither the Tabernacle was removed in all probability after Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob. For the present David may have found it wisest to recognise the two priests as of equal authority, and to acquiesce in the separation of the Tabernacle and the Ark, allowing Zadok to continue the sacrificial service at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 40), while he established another service in Jerusalem before the Ark (1 Chr. xvi. 37).

vv. 1—19 are the *Haphtarah* or lesson from the prophets appointed to be read in the synagogue in connexion with Lev. ix. 1—xi. 47. The judgment upon Uzzah repeats the warning of the judgment upon Nadab and Abihu.

Psalms ci., xv., lxviii., xxiv., cxxxii., should be studied as illustrating and supplementing the history. See Introd. Ch. VIII. p. 46.

1—11. REMOVAL OF THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM. UZZAH SMITTEN FOR HIS IRREVERENCE.

1. *Again, David gathered together*] **And David gathered together again.** "Again" refers either to the assembly convened for David's coronation (ch. v. 1—3), or to the muster for the Philistine war recorded in the verses immediately preceding (ch. v. 17—25).

A more elaborate account of David's preparations for this ceremony is given in 1 Chr. xiii. 1—5. We are there told how David consulted with the representatives of the people, and gathered a general assembly of the whole nation. This important step towards the re-establishment of religious worship must be a *national* act. The Chronicler's object in writing leads him to give special attention to details of religious organization, where the writer of Samuel is content to condense his account into a single sentence. See Introd. Ch. III. p. 22.

thirty thousand] The smallness of the number may be explained if we suppose it to refer only to the "captains of thousands and hundreds and every leader" mentioned in 1 Chr. xiii. 1. A general assembly of the people would have been much more numerous.

2. *from Baale of Judah*] *Baale of Judah* is generally supposed to be another name for *Kirjath-jearim*, which is called *Baalah* in Josh. xv. 9;

bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called *by* the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the
3 cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in

1 Chr. xiii. 6, and Kirjath-Baal in Josh. xv. 60. Here the Ark had remained since its return from the country of the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2). If the preposition "*from*" is correct, we must assume that the narrator passes over the journey to Kirjath-jearim, and speaks of the return only: but this seems improbable, and most commentators emend the text in accordance with 1 Chr. xiii. 6, and read "**to.**"

The ancient versions however do not take the words as a proper name, but render them "*of the rulers*" or "*of the men, of Judah,*" the word being the same as that translated "*men*" in ch. xxi. 12. If this is right, the name of the place has dropped out from the text and must be restored, so that the verse would read, "And David and all the people that were with him of the rulers of Judah arose and went to Baalah to bring up, &c." This appears to have been the reading found by the LXX., though partly misunderstood by them, and has strong claims to be considered as the true text.

The usual identification of Kirjath-jearim with *Kuryet-el-enab* (see note on 1 Sam. vi. 21) has lately been called in question by Lieut. Conder, who proposes to place it at *'Erma*, four miles E. of *Ain Shems* (Beth-shemesh), on the edge of the *Wady-es-Surar* or Valley of Sorek. The name *'Erma* corresponds to the form *Arim*, which took the place of the original *Jearim* in later times (Ezra ii. 25); the dense brushwood still clothing the hills agrees with the meaning of the name "city of forests;" and the position suits the data much better than the *Kuryet-el-enab* site. See Pal. Expl. Fund *Quart. Paper* for Oct. 1881, p. 261.

whose name, &c.] Better, **which is called by the Name, the name of Jehovah of Hosts, who sitteth enthroned upon the cherubim.** Cp. Deut. xxviii. 10; 1 Kings viii. 43. "The Name" is first written absolutely, as at the end of Lev. xxiv. 16, and then more fully defined as "the name of Jehovah of Hosts." In later Jewish writings "the Name" is commonly used to signify God, and especially as an equivalent for the sacred name Jehovah which might not be pronounced.

The Ark is specially said to be "called by the name of Jehovah of Hosts," because it was the symbol of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, and because it was the place where He chiefly chose to manifest Himself by visible tokens to His people. Cp. notes on 1 Sam. iv. 4, 21; and for the meaning of the title "Jehovah of Hosts" see Additional Note 1. to 1 Sam. p. 235.

3. *set the ark*] Lit. *made the ark to ride.*

upon a new cart] Not desecrated by common uses. Cp. 1 Sam. vi. 7. This was however a breach of the Levitical law, which prescribed that the Ark should be borne upon the shoulders of the Levites (Num. iii. 29—31, vii. 9).

Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of 4
Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all 5
the house of Israel played before the LORD on all *manner of instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

in Gibeah] Rather, **on the hill**, as the same word is correctly translated in 1 Sam. vii. 1. Some eminence in or near Kirjath-jearim is meant.

Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab] The Ark had been in the house of Abinadab for seventy or eighty years—twenty during the Philistine oppression, forty or fifty under Samuel and Saul, and perhaps ten of David's reign. See the Chronological Table in the Introd. to 1 Sam. p. 24.

As Eleazar the son of Abinadab was old enough to be entrusted with the charge of the Ark when it was placed in his father's house, we must clearly understand "sons" here in the wider sense of "descendants," grandsons or great-grandsons. Cp. ch. ix. 9.

3, 4. The text of these verses is corrupt. Some words have been accidentally repeated by a scribe in copying the Hebrew, and should be struck out, on the authority of the LXX., and the end of *v.* 3 and *v.* 4 read thus: "Now Uzzah and Ahio the sons of Abinadab were driving the cart with the Ark of God, and Ahio was going before the Ark." *v.* 4 is omitted altogether in 1 Chr. It is doubtful moreover whether *Ahio* is a proper name at all. The same consonants with different vowels would mean *his brethren*, as the Sept. renders the word here, or *his brother*, as the Vulg. renders it in 1 Chr. xiii. 7.

5. *played*] The word denotes a dance accompanied by music, such as frequently formed part of a religious festival. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

on all manner of instruments made of *fir wood*] The expression is a strange one, and the text seems to be corrupt. Probably we should adopt the reading of the parallel passage in 1 Chron., **with all their might and with songs**. The Hebrew words are very similar, and the Sept. text here, though interpolated in its present form, supports the change.

even on harps, &c.] The harp (Heb. *kinnôr*) and psaltery (Heb. *nebel*) were stringed instruments, the exact form of which is unknown; the timbrel, also called the tabret, (Heb. *tôph*) was a tambourine or hand drum. The etymology of the word translated *cornet*, which occurs here only, shews that it denotes some kind of instrument which was played by being shaken, perhaps similar to the **sistrum** of the Egyptians, which consisted of rings hung loosely on iron rods, so as to make a tinkling sound when shaken. See the engravings in Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. 1. p. 497 ff. Chron. reads "trumpets" which probably suggested the misrendering of the E.V. Cymbals were plates of metal, held in each hand, and played by being clashed together.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah
put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it;
7 for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was
kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his*
8 error; and there he died by the ark of God. And David

6. *Nachon's threshingfloor*] There is nothing to shew where this place was. It is called in 1 Chr. xiii. 9, the threshingfloor of *Chidon*. It may have been known by both names, but more probably one of the two forms is due to corruption of the text.

for the oxen shook it] This is the most probable explanation of an obscure word. The Ark seemed to be on the point of falling from the cart, owing to some sudden start or stumble of the oxen, or the roughness of the road.

7. *for* his *error*] The Hebrew word occurs nowhere else, but if genuine, may best be rendered thus, or as in the margin, *for his rashness*. The reading of Chronicles, "because he put his hand to the ark," sounds like a substitution for an expression which had already become obscure.

God smote him there for his *error*] As before at Beth-shemesh (1 Sam. vi. 19), an act of irreverence towards the Ark was punished with death. Such a penalty for a well-meant and natural action seems to us at first sight strangely severe. But it must be remembered that one of the great lessons which the nation of Israel had to learn was the unapproachable Majesty of the holy God. The Ark was the symbol of His presence, and the Levitical ordinances were designed to secure the strictest reverence for it. It was to be carried by the Levites, but they might not come near until it had been covered by the priests, nor touch it except by the staves provided for the purpose, upon pain of death (Num. iv. 5, 15, 19, 20). It is probable that Uzzah was a Levite, and if so, he ought to have known these injunctions: but in any case, as the Ark had been under his charge, he ought to have made himself acquainted with them. Perhaps he had come to regard the sacred symbol which had been in his house so long with undue familiarity. Nor was David free from blame in allowing such a neglect of the Law. The occasion was an important one. It was the first step in the inauguration of a new era of worship, in the newly established capital of the kingdom; and if these breaches of the divine ordinances had been left unpunished, the lessons they were intended to teach might have been neglected. Uzzah's death was necessary for a solemn warning to David and the people. "By this severe stroke upon the first violation of the law, God impressed a dread upon the hearts of men, and gave a sanction to His commands that no man should attempt *upon any pretence whatever*, to act in defiance of his Law, or boldly to dispense with what God has established." (Bp. Sanderson, quoted by Bp. Wordsworth.)

If such reverence was due to the symbol, with how much greater reverence should the realities of the Christian Covenant be regarded? See Heb. x. 28, 29.

was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called *the name* of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and 9
said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? So 10
David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside *into* the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the LORD 11
continued *in* the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

12—19. *Removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem.*

And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath 12
blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and

8. *was displeased*] The same word is used in 1 Sam. xv. 11 (E.V. *it grieved Samuel*) to denote vexation akin to anger.

made a breach] **Broke forth upon Uzzah**: the same verb as in ch. v. 20: used in a precisely similar sense of a sudden divine judgment in Ex. xix. 22, 24.

10. *Obed-edom the Gittite*] Obed-edom was a Levite belonging to the family of the Korahites, who were descended from Kohath (1 Chron. xxvi. 1, 4—8; Num. xvi. 1). He is called a Gittite probably because he was a native of the Levitical city of Gath-rimmon, in Dan or Manasseh, which was assigned to the Kohathites (Josh. xxi. 24, 25). Thus there was an appropriateness in his being chosen to take charge of the Ark, since he belonged to the family which was originally appointed to carry it from place to place (Num. iv. 15). The site of Gath-rimmon is not determined, but it seems to have been further from Jerusalem than Kirjath-jearim, and this appears to indicate either that Obed-edom had removed from his native place and was living near Jerusalem, or that "Perez-uzzah" was not far from Kirjath-jearim, and that the special fitness of Obed-edom to take charge of the Ark induced David to take it to his house, though at a greater distance from Jerusalem.

The name Obed-edom (=*servant of Edom*) is peculiar. It may possibly refer to the servitude of some member of the family to the Edomites.

12—19. REMOVAL OF THE ARK FROM THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM TO JERUSALEM.

12. *So David went*] Some Latin and a few Greek MSS. soften the abruptness of the text by inserting before this sentence the words, "And David said, I will go and bring back the Ark with blessing unto my house;" but they are in all probability only a gloss.

brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom
13 *into* the city of David with gladness. And it was *so*, that
when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces,
14 he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before
the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded *with* a
15 linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought
up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound
16 of the trumpet. And as the ark of the LORD came *into* the
city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a
window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before
17 the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. And they
brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in
the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it:

with gladness] i. e. festal rejoicings; jubilant shouts and songs.

13. *they that bare the ark of the* LORD] The requirements of the law were now duly observed, as is recorded at length in 1 Chr. xv., where further details are given about the preparation of a tent to receive the Ark, the number of Levites who took part in the ceremony, and the arrangements for the music which accompanied the procession.

had gone six paces] As soon as the procession had started on its way, without any sign of the divine displeasure, David offered a sacrifice as a thank-offering for the prosperous commencement, and an intercession for the successful completion, of his undertaking. Cp. 1 Chr. xv. 26, "And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams."

14. *David danced*] The dances which were the usual expression of rejoicing on occasions of national thanksgiving (Ex. xv. 20, 21; Jud. xi. 34) and religious festivals (Ps. cxlix. 3, cl. 4) were generally performed by women only. David's enthusiasm did not fear to transgress the limits of conventional propriety.

before the LORD] For the Ark was the symbol of Jehovah's presence.

a linen ephod] David laid aside his royal robes and appeared in the distinctive dress of a priest. As the head and representative of "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6), the king possessed a priestly character; and David on this occasion exercised priestly functions in directing the sacrifices, even if he did not offer them himself (*vv.* 17, 18), and in blessing the people (*v.* 18). See Introd. ch. VII. p. 43.

16. *leaping and dancing*] Two peculiar words, the first found here only, the second only here and in *v.* 14, are used to denote the special modes of dancing anciently employed in religious solemnities. In 1 Chron. xv. 29 two verbs in ordinary use have been substituted, shewing that these distinctive terms had become obsolete.

she despised him] The proud daughter of the house of Saul was incapable of appreciating the honour of humility.

and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And as soon as David had made an end of 18
offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt 19
among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

20—23. *Michal's contemptuous pride rebuked by David.*

Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal 20
the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How

17. *the tabernacle*] Rather, **the tent**, as in 1 Chr. xv. 1. The tabernacle proper was at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 39).

18. *burnt offerings and peace offerings*] The "burnt offerings" were dedicatory, the "peace offerings" eucharistic. The latter furnished the festival meal for the assembled people (Lev. vii. 15). Compare Solomon's sacrifices at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 62—65).

he blessed the people in the name of the LORD *of hosts*] As Solomon did (1 Kings viii. 14, 55). "The name of the LORD" signifies "Jehovah as He has revealed Himself to men," and "to bless in the name of the LORD" signifies 'to invoke from Jehovah such blessings as He covenants to give in accordance with His revelation of Himself.' Cp. Ps. cxxix. 8.

19. *dealt*] In the old sense of *divided* or *distributed*, from A.S. *dælan*, to distribute, from which comes *dole*, a portion *dealt* out. Cp. Is. lviii. 7; Rom. xii. 3.

a cake of bread] The Heb. word for *cake* occurs elsewhere only in the Pentateuch, and is always applied to cakes prepared for sacrificial purposes.

a good piece of flesh] The word is only found elsewhere in the parallel passage of 1 Chr., and is of uncertain meaning. The most probable conjectures are (1) a piece of roast meat (Vulg.); (2) a portion of flesh; (3) a measure of wine.

a flagon of wine] More probably, **a cake of raisins**.

20—23. MICHAL'S CONTEMPTUOUS PRIDE REBUKED BY DAVID.

20. *And Michal*, &c.] The account of David's meeting with Michal is omitted in 1 Chr.

How glorious, &c.] Better, **How honourable did the king of Israel make himself to-day.** The E.V. weakens the point of David's answer in *v.* 22 by translating the same Hebrew word differently in the two verses.

glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain *fellows* shamelessly uncovereth himself!
21 And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over
22 Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of,
23 of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

who uncovered himself, &c.] Stripped off his royal robe, and appeared in a plain ephod, as a worthless buffoon strips off his outer garment to play immodest antics.

vain]='empty,' 'worthless.'

21. It was *before the* LORD] **Before the LORD, who chose me rather than thy father, &c....yea I will play before the LORD.** "Before the LORD" stands emphatically at the beginning of David's answer. No service offered to the God to whom he owed all his advancement could be degrading. Thus he defends his own conduct, and at the same time he humbles Michal's pride by alluding to Saul's rejection.

The Sept. (B) reads, "Before the Lord will I dance: blessed be the Lord who chose, &c."

It is related of Sir Thomas More that he used, even when Lord Chancellor, to put on a surplice and sing in his parish church at Chelsea. The Duke of Norfolk one day found him doing so, and expostulated with him: "A parish clarke, lord chancellour, a parish clarke! you dishonour the King and his office." "Nay," quoth Sir Thomas, smiling upon the duke, "your grace may not thinke that the King, your maister and myne, will be offended with men for serving of God his Maister; or by this my present behaviour account his office dishonoured." Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biogr.* II. p. 68.

ruler] See note on "captain" in ch. v. 2.

22. *And I will yet*, &c.] **And I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and will be humble in mine own eyes.** Michal had taunted David with degrading himself in the eyes of the meanest servants. He replies that even if he humbled himself yet more deeply, instead of priding himself on his royal dignity, they would continue to honour him.

23. *Therefore Michal*] Simply, **And Michal.** She was condemned to the reproach of childlessness, the sharpest privation to an Oriental woman. Cp. Gen. xxx. 1; 1 Sam. i. 5.

CH. VII. 1—29. *The Promise of Perpetual Dominion to the house of David.*

1—3. *David's desire to build a house for the Lord.*

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and 7
the LORD had given him rest round about from all his
enemies; that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See 2
now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God
dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, 3
Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the LORD *is* with thee.

CH. VII. 1—29. THE PROMISE OF PERPETUAL DOMINION TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

= 1 Chr. xvii. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 19—37.

1—3. DAVID'S DESIRE TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR THE LORD.

1. *when the king sat in his house*] **When the king dwelt in his house**, which he had built in the "city of David" (ch. v. 9, 11; 1 Chr. xiv. 1). At what period of his reign David formed this resolution to build a temple cannot be exactly determined. On the one hand the emphatic words "when the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (cp. *v.* 9) seem to point to a time after some at least of the wars recorded in ch. viii. On the other hand it was before the birth of Solomon (*v.* 12), and so cannot be placed in the latter years of his reign. The arrangement of the book is not strictly chronological, and this narrative finds a most suitable place here from its close connexion with the subject of the preceding chapter.

2. *Nathan the prophet*] The first mention of one of the most eminent men in the reigns of David and Solomon. It was he who rebuked David for his sin with Bathsheba (ch. xii. 1 ff.); who became Solomon's tutor (ch. xii. 25, note), and took a leading part in securing his succession to the throne (1 Kings i. 22 ff.); who wrote a history of the reign of David and of part at least of the reign of Solomon (1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29), from which in all probability a large portion of the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, is derived.

within curtains] The term applied in Ex. xxvi. 1 ff., xxxvi. 8 ff., to the coverings of the tabernacle.

4—17. THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO DAVID.

The connexion of thought in *vv.* 5—13 is as follows: "*Thou* shalt not build a house for *Me* (5—7), but *I*, who have chosen thee to be the ruler of my people, will build a house *for thee* (8—11), and thy son shall erect a house for ME" (12, 13). The reasons why David's zeal was thus checked must be carefully considered. The unsettled condition of the nation had made a fixed sanctuary impossible hitherto, and even now the time for it was not yet fully come. The house of David must be firmly established and peace secured, before this great

4—17. *The Lord's message to David.*

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD
5 came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David,
Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me a house for me
6 to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since
the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of
Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a
7 tabernacle. In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all
the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes
of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel,
8 saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar? Now
therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus

step in the history of the national religion could be advantageously taken. Again, David was not to build the house "because he had shed much blood, and had made great wars" (1 Chron. xxii. 8, xxviii. 3).

Thus personally David was not the fitting man to build the temple, though he is not blamed for wars which were a necessity of the time; and the very fact that he had to wage these wars, shewed that the time for building the temple had not come, because the kingdom was not yet firmly established.

4. *the word of the* LORD *came unto Nathan*] Observe the clear distinction between Nathan's own judgment, which approved David's resolution, and the divine message which he was commissioned to deliver to David.

5. *my servant David*] Any Israelite might call Himself God's servant in addressing God: but only a few who were raised up to do special service, such as Moses and Joshua, are honoured by being thus distinctively styled "Servants of Jehovah." See Introd. p. 44.

Shalt thou build] *Thou* is emphatic. The question of course is equivalent to a negative.

7. *with any of the tribes of Israel*] 1 Chr. xvii. 6 reads *judges* for *tribes*, and at first sight this appears to be required by the following words, "whom I commanded," &c., which seem more applicable to an individual ruler than to a tribe. But the reading "tribes" is supported by the versions, and may be understood of the different tribes which through the Judges and leaders chosen from them successively attained the supremacy, as Ephraim in the time of Joshua, Dan in the days of Samson, Benjamin in the reign of Saul. Compare David's expression in 1 Chr. xxviii. 4, "he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler," and the reference to the choice of the *tribe* of Judah and the rejection of the *tribe* of Ephraim in Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68.

to feed] **To tend**, as a shepherd tends his sheep. Cp. note on ch. v. 2.

a house of cedar] Cp. *v.* 2. A permanent sanctuary with beams of the most costly timber. See note on ch. v. 11.

saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, 9
and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a 10
place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, and *as* since the time that I com- 11
manded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee a house. And when thy days 12
be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy

8. *from the sheepcote*] Rather, **from the pasture.** Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71.

to be ruler] Cp. ch. v. 2, vi. 21.

10. *Moreover I will appoint*] It is probably best to take the verbs here as perfects: **And I have appointed...and have planted them, and they dwell in their own place.** For the metaphor of *planting*, comp. Ex. xv. 17; Ps. xliv. 2.

and move no more] Better, **and shall not be disturbed any more.**

the children of wickedness] *Sons of wickedness* = wicked men. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 22.

10, 11. *as beforetime, and* as *since the time*] It is best to connect the first clause of *v.* 11 with *v.* 10. *Beforetime* refers to the beginning of the nation's history in Egypt; *since*, &c. to the various oppressions they had suffered from the beginning of the period of the Judges down to the present.

and have caused thee to rest] **And have given thee rest**, as in *v.* 1; to be connected with the verbs at the beginning of *v.* 10, *I have appointed...and have planted them.*

Also, &c.] Or, **And the Lord hath told thee**, referring to the communications made to David by Samuel. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 28.

12. And *when*] *And* is not in the Hebrew text; perhaps *and it shall come to pass*, which is found in the LXX., has dropped out. Nathan now passes on from recounting God's past mercies to Israel and David to a direct prophecy concerning the establishment of David's house.

I will set up thy seed] First Solomon, who recognises the fulfilment of this promise in his elevation to the throne (1 Kings viii. 15—20); then the line of David's descendants who succeeded him on the throne of Judah; and finally Christ, in whom the prophecy reaches its highest fulfilment. See Luke i. 31—33; Acts ii. 29—31; xiii. 22, 23.

13 bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his
14 kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:
15 but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it*
16 from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be stablished for ever before thee:

13. *for my name*] The Name of God signifies God Himself so far as He has revealed and manifested Himself to men. His promise concerning the Temple was that He would "put His name there," that is, that He would be present and reveal Himself there in an especial manner. See 1 Kings viii. 29, ix. 3.

stablish] A shorter form of *establish*, both words being derived from Lat. *stabilire*. Cp. *special* and *especial* from *species*, *state* and *estate* from *status*.

14. *I will be his father and he shall be my son*] The nation of Israel is honoured with the lofty title of "Jehovah's son" (Ex. iv. 22; Deut. xiv. 1; Hos. xi. 1); and the king, as the representative of the nation, enjoys the same distinction. This relationship implies, on the part of God, the watchful care and love of a parent; on the part of the king, the duty of loyal trust and willing obedience. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27, where similar expressions are applied to David; Ps. ii. 7; and 1 Chr. xxii. 9, 10, xxviii. 6, where David quotes this promise in reference to Solomon. It finds its highest fulfilment in the mysterious eternal relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son, with reference to which these words are quoted in Heb. i. 5. See Introd. p. 43.

If he commit, &c.] A warning that this high dignity will not exempt him from the danger of sin nor from its punishment. He will be chastised, if need be, as men chastise their children to correct and reclaim them. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 30—33, and 1 Kings xi. 34—36, 39.

15. *shall not depart*, &c.] Lit, **shall not be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I took away from before thee.** The three verbs belong to the same root. But there is perhaps some error in the text. 1 Chr. xvii. 13 reads, "my mercy will I not take away from him, as I took it away from him who was before thee;" and the Sept. here has, "My mercy will I not take away from him, as I took it away from them that I took away from before me."

16. *thy kingdom shall be stablished*] Better, **thy kingdom shall be made sure.** Two different words are translated "shall be stablished" in this verse. The second corresponds to that in *v.* 13: the first is that rendered in 1 Sam. ii. 35, "a *sure* house, and in Is. lv. 3, "the *sure* mercies of David."

before thee] The explanation that "David is regarded as seeing all his descendants pass before him in a vision," is forced, and it is best to follow the LXX. in reading **before me.** This reading moreover seems to be required by *vv.* 26 and 29.

thy throne shall be stablished for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. 17

18—29. *David's prayer and thanksgiving.*

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, 18

17. *this vision*] The manner in which God's message was communicated to Nathan was by "a vision," in which his spiritual sight was quickened to discern the truth. The word for "vision" is derived from the same root as *chôzeh*, one of the words translated 'seer' (see on 1 Sam. ix. 9), and is distinguished as a method of revelation from a 'dream.' Cp. Is. i. 1.

On the Messianic interpretation of this prophecy, see Additional Note I. p. 233.

18—29. DAVID'S PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING.

David's address to God consists of (*a*) humble thanksgiving for the undeserved favour shewn to him and his house, *vv.* 18—21; (*b*) praise for God's past manifestations of his glory in and to Israel, *vv.* 22—24; (*c*) petition for the final fulfilment of the promise, *vv.* 25—29.

18. *Then went king David in, and sat before the* LORD] In the tent where the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, was. As sitting does not seem to have been a customary posture for prayer, some commentators render *tarried* instead of *sat*. Others suppose that David sat to meditate, and afterwards stood up to pray.

Who am *I* &c.] Cp. Jacob's language in Gen. xxxii. 10.

O Lord GOD] Whenever GOD is thus printed in small capitals, it represents the sacred name JEHOVAH. From very ancient times the Jewish practice in reading the Scriptures has been to substitute in place of Jehovah *Adônai*, which means *my Lord*, or *Lord;* or if the title Adônai is joined with Jehovah, as here, *Elôhîm*, which means *God*. The E.V. follows the Jewish practice in giving LORD and GOD, and whenever they represent the name Jehovah indicates the fact by the use of capitals. "Lord GOD," which represents "my Lord Jehovah," must therefore be distinguished from "LORD God" (*v.* 25), which represents "Jehovah Elohim," i.e. "Jehovah God." See Additional Note II. on 1 Samuel, p. 236.

The appropriateness of this address "my Lord Jehovah" in David's thanksgiving must be carefully noted. It is not merely an acknowledgment of the Divine sovereignty in general, but expresses the consciousness of belonging specially to God, and standing under His immediate guidance and protection. See Oehler's *Theology of the Old Testament*, I. 148. It is the correlative of the title "my servant" with which God distinguishes David. It calls to mind St Paul's words "the God whose I am, whom also I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23). Compare Abram's use of it in Gen. xv. 2, 8; and Moses' in Deut. iii. 24, ix. 26.

19 that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a
small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken
also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And
20 *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can
David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest
21 thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine
own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make
22 thy servant know *them*. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD
God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God
beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our

When he turns to praise God for his dealings with Israel in general, David uses the ordinary title *Jehovah Elôhîm* (*v.* 22), and retains it in *v.* 25 at the beginning of his petition, as if to identify the covenant God of Israel with the God to whom he makes his prayer: but in *vv.* 28, 29 he returns to the more familiar address of confident trust "my Lord Jehovah."

19. *And* is *this the manner of man*] It is best to understand these difficult words as David's expression of humble astonishment at the greatness of the honour destined for him and his house. Render, **And this is a law for men!** i.e. this decree that my kingdom shall be established for ever, is to be valid for weak human beings, such as myself and my posterity! Another explanation very commonly adopted is, *And this is the manner of man*, viz. to speak so familiarly and condescendingly as thou hast done to me; but the Heb. word is used nowhere else in the sense of *manner*, and the whole context requires a reference to the substance rather than to the manner of the communication.

The reading in 1 Chron. is quite different: "thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree." One or other of the texts is perhaps corrupt.

20. *thou, Lord* GOD, *knowest thy servant*] Words fail, and David appeals to God's omniscience. Cp. Ps. xvii. 3, cxxxix. 1—4; John xxi. 17.

21. *For thy word's sake*] To fulfil Thy promises made to me through Samuel. The reading of 1 Chr. xvii. 19, and of the LXX. here, is *for thy servant's sake*.

22. *Wherefore thou art great*] Since Thou hast done these great things for me, I praise Thee and acknowledge Thy greatness. Cp. Ps. xxxv. 27, xl. 16, xlviii. 1.

for there is *none like thee*, &c.] Cp. Ex. xv. 11; Deut. iii. 24, iv. 35; 1 Sam. ii. 2.

according to all, &c.] David passes from the evidence of God's greatness derived from his own experience, to the evidence afforded by the history of His dealings with Israel, handed down from father to son by oral tradition. Cp. Ex. x. 2; Deut. iv. 9; Ps. xliv. 1, lxxxvi. 8—10.

ears. And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, 23
even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to
himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great
things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which
thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and
their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people 24
Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, LORD,
art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word 25
that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concern-
ing his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast
said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The 26
LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of
thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O 27

23. *And what*, &c.] **For what**, &c., a further reason for the last statement. Cp. Deut. iv. 7, 32—38.

whom God went &c.] Better, **which their god went to redeem.** *Elôhîm*, the Heb. word for God, is a plural noun, but regularly takes a singular verb when it denotes the true God. Here the verb "went" is in the plural, which indicates that the gods of the nations are meant to be included. The sense is, 'Where can any nation be found, which has been delivered by the deity it worships, as Israel was delivered from Egypt by Jehovah?'

for you] "You" can only refer to Israel, and an address to the people is quite out of place in David's prayer to God. We must either omit *for you* with the LXX, or read *for them*, i.e. the nation, with the Vulgate.

for thy land] This gives no satisfactory sense, and "the nations and their gods" at the end of the verse has no proper construction in the existing text. It is best to emend the text by the help of the LXX, compared with 1 Chr. xvii. 21, and read *to drive out* in place of *for thy land*. The close of the verse will then stand thus; "*and to do great things and terrible, to drive out nations and their gods before thy people, which thou redeemedst for thyself out of Egypt.*"

The construction, which began in the third person, in connexion with the relative clause, returns at the end of the verse to a direct address to God.

great things and terrible] The miracles of the Exodus, the journey through the wilderness, the Entry into Canaan. Cp. Deut. x. 21 for the phrase.

24. *thou hast confirmed*] **Established**, the same word as in *v.* 13. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 6.

art become their God] Hast proved Thyself to be their God, in fulfilment of the promises in Gen. xvii. 7, 8; Ex. vi. 7.

26. *let the house of thy servant David be established*] Rather, **the house of thy servant David shall be established**; an expression of

LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant
28 found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and
29 thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that *it* may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it:* and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

CH. VIII. *The Development of David's Kingdom.*

1, 2. *Conquest of the Philistines and Moabites.*

8 And after this it came to pass, that David smote the

confident assurance, the ground of which is introduced by the "for" of *v.* 27.

27. *hast revealed to thy servant*] Lit. *hast uncovered the ear of thy servant*, a figure of speech said to be derived from the practice of removing the hair or a corner of the turban from another's ear in order to whisper a secret into it. Cp. 1 Sam. ix. 15.

therefore] The promise justified a prayer which otherwise would have seemed presumptuous.

found in his heart] Lit. *found his heart;* i.e. **found courage.** Cp. the phrase "to take heart."

28. *thou* art *that God*] Better, **thou art God, and thy words shall be truth.** Truth is an essential attribute of God, and His promises must therefore prove true. Cp. Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. xix. 9; John xvii. 17.

29. *let the house of thy servant be blessed*] Or, **shall the house of thy servant be blessed.** David concludes with words of confident hope, on the ground that "Jehovah hath spoken it." Cp. 1 Chr. xvii. 27.

CHAP. VIII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF DAVID'S KINGDOM.

= 1 Chr. xviii.

1, 2. CONQUEST OF THE PHILISTINES AND MOABITES.

1. *And after this it came to pass*] This chapter contains a summary account of the wars by which David established the supremacy of Israel among the surrounding nations. At what periods of his reign they were waged is not stated. As has been already implied in the note on ch. vii. 1, it seems best to consider the words "and after this it came to pass" as a general formula of transition and connexion, not necessarily indicating a strict chronological sequence. It may possibly be derived from the annals which were the original source of the history. Cp. ch. x. 1, xiii. 1.

Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines. And he smote 2
Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even *with* two lines measured he to put to death, and *with* one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

3—8. *Conquest of Zobah and Damascus.*

David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of 3

took Metheg-ammah, &c.] The most probable explanation of this obscure expression is *took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philistines*, i.e. wrested from them the control of their chief city. This is equivalent to the statement in 1 Chr. xviii. 1 that "David took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines;" and it may be noticed that the metaphor of the 'mother-city' is employed there, for the word translated "towns" literally means *daughters*. Gath was allowed to retain its king as a tributary (1 Kings ii. 39). On its site and history see note on 1 Sam. v. 8.

2. *casting them down to the ground*] **Making them lie down on the ground.** The Moabite prisoners, doubtless only the fighting men, were ordered to lie down upon the ground in rows, which were measured with a measuring line. Two thirds of them were executed, and only the remaining third spared. Why David inflicted such terrible vengeance on a nation which had once received him and given his parents an asylum (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4) can only be conjectured. A Jewish tradition relates that the king of Moab betrayed his trust and murdered David's parents. Possibly the Moabites may have been guilty of some special act of treachery in one of David's wars with their neighbours the Ammonites or Edomites. The exploit recorded in ch. xxiii. 20 was perhaps performed in this war. By this victory Balaam's prophecy was fulfilled (Num. xxiv. 17).

brought gifts] Paid tribute to David. Cp. *v.* 6; 1 Kings iv. 21. At the division of the kingdom, Moab seems to have fallen to Israel, for we find Mesha, the king of Moab, paying a heavy tribute to Ahab, and at his death making a vigorous effort to throw off the Israelite yoke (2 Kings iii. 4 ff.).

3—8. Conquest of Zobah and Damascus.

3. *Hadadezer*] This name is written *Hadarezer* in ch. x. 16—19, and in Chronicles, the letters *d* (ד) and *r* (ר) being easily confused in Hebrew. *Hadad* was the name of the Syrian sun-god, and *Hadadezer* appears to be the true form, meaning "whose help is Hadad."

Zobah] The exact position and limits of this kingdom are undetermined. It seems to have been north-east of Damascus and south of Hamath, between the Orontes and Euphrates. Saul waged wars with its "kings," who were probably independent chieftains (1 Sam. xiv. 47),

Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Eu-
4 phrates. And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved
5 of them *for* an hundred chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David

but now it was consolidated under one ruler, and was a country of considerable wealth and power.

to recover his border] The phrase cannot be thus rendered, but means probably either **to renew his attack** or **to re-establish his power.** The parallel passage in 1 Chr. xviii. 3 has a different verb, meaning *to set up his power.* The subject of the sentence is Hadadezer, and the occasion referred to is probably that which is described more fully in ch. x. 15—19. The Ammonites had hired the Syrians to help them against David, who defeated their combined forces. Hadadezer thereupon summoned the Syrians from beyond the Euphrates to his assistance, but was totally defeated.

at the river Euphrates] *Euphrates* is not in the written text, but according to the Jewish tradition is to be read (see Introd. p. 15). But the addition is unnecessary. "The River" by itself was understood to mean the Euphrates. Cp. ch. x. 16; Ps. lxxii. 8.

4. *a thousand* chariots, *and seven hundred horsemen*] The Heb. text as it stands can only mean *a thousand and seven hundred horsemen;* but it seems best to follow the text of the LXX. and of 1 Chr. xviii. 4 in reading **a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen.**

houghed] Or **hamstrung**; disabled by cutting the back sinews of their hind legs. Cp. Josh. xi. 6, 9.

reserved] To grace his triumph.

5. *the Syrians of Damascus*] The kingdom of which Damascus was the capital was the most powerful branch of the Aramaeans or Syrians, and played an important part in the history of Israel. It did not long remain subject to them. In Solomon's reign a certain Rezon established himself at Damascus, and proved a troublesome enemy (1 Kings xi. 23—25). Benhadad I. was bribed by Asa to break his league with Baasha and invade the Israelite territory (1 Kings xv. 18), and actually built a Syrian quarter in Samaria (1 Kings xx. 34). His son and successor Ben-hadad II. besieged Samaria (1 Kings xx. 1), but was defeated, and compelled to submit to Ahab (1 Kings xx. 34). But the defeat and death of Ahab at Ramoth-gilead again gave Syria the upper hand (1 Kings xxii.); and in the reign of Jehoram Samaria was once more besieged by them, and only saved by a miraculous interposition (2 Kings vi. 24—vii.). The rising power of Assyria now began to threaten Syria, but in spite of the defeats he suffered from it, the usurper Hazael, succeeding in repulsing the combined forces of Judah and Israel at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kings viii. 28, 29), ravaged the trans-Jordanic territory of Israel (2 Kings x. 32, 33), captured Gath, and threatened Jerusalem, which only escaped on payment of a heavy ransom (2 Kings

slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then 6
David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians
became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the
LORD preserved David whithersoever he went. And David 7
took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadad-
ezer, and brought them *to* Jerusalem. And from Betah, 8

xii. 17, 18), and seriously reduced the power of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings xiii. 3—7). Joash, however, recovered the lost territory (2 Kings xiii. 25), and Jeroboam II. extended his conquests to Damascus (2 Kings xiv. 28). Three quarters of a century later Syria reappears as the ally of Israel against Judah. Rezin, king of Damascus, made a league with Pekah to depose Ahaz and set up a creature of their own in his stead (2 Kings xvi. 5; Is. vii. 1—9); but their attempt to take Jerusalem failed, and Ahaz persuaded Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to attack Syria. Rezin was slain and Damascus destroyed (2 Kings xvi. 7—9). Damascus now disappears from the O.T. history; but by the fourth century B.C. it had been rebuilt, and has maintained its prosperity down to the present day. It is situated in a fertile plain watered by the river *Barada*, which is probably the Abana of Scripture, to the E. of the great mountain chain of the Anti-Libanus, on the edge of the desert. Travellers describe it as "embosomed in a wide forest of fruit trees, intersected and surrounded by sparkling streams, in the midst of an earthly paradise." This natural beauty and fertility, combined with its importance as a centre of trade, have secured the permanence of its prosperity for nearly 4,000 years. See Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, III. 443 ff; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 414 ff.

6. *garrisons*] Military posts to secure the country. Some render the word *officers* for the collection of the tribute, but the E.V. is probably right. Cp. note on 1 Sam. x. 5.

brought gifts] See note on *v.* 2.

preserved] Or **saved**, as in ch. iii. 18, xxii. 3, 4.

7. *that were on the servants of Hadadezer*] Or, **that belonged to**, &c. Probably it was his bodyguard which was distinguished by these golden shields. Similarly a corps of the Macedonian army under Alexander the Great was known as "the silver-shields" (ἀργυράσπιδες).

The Septuagint adds at the end of the verse: "And Susakim [i.e. Shishak] king of Egypt took them, when he went up to Jerusalem in the days of Roboam the son of Solomon." In 1 Kings xiv. 26 there is a corresponding addition in the Sept.: "And the golden spears which David took from the hand of the servants of Adraazar king of Soba and carried to Jerusalem, he took them all."

8. *Betah*] The site of this city is unknown, and even the form of the name is uncertain. Chr. has *Tibhath*, and the reading of the Sept. makes it probable that the original form here was *Tebah*, which occurs as the name of one of the sons of Nahor the Syrian (Gen. xxii. 24).

and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

9—12. *Congratulatory embassy from Toi king of Hamath.*

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten
10 all the host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of
11 brass: which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD,

Berothai] Probably the same as *Berothah*, mentioned by Ezekiel (ch. xlvii. 16) in connexion with Hamath and Damascus. The name *Chun*, given in Chr., may be a later name for the place, or a corruption of the text. Its site has not been determined.

brass] Rather, **copper**, or **bronze**. The word certainly denotes a simple metal in some passages, e.g. Deut. viii. 9; in others perhaps a compound one, but if so, *bronze* (copper and tin), not brass (copper and zinc), which was unknown to the Hebrews.

The Sept. has an addition here similar to that in Chr.: "Therewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the lavers, and all the vessels."

9—12. CONGRATULATORY EMBASSY FROM TOI KING OF HAMATH.

9. *Toi*] The Sept. agrees with Chr. in reading his name *Toü*.

Hamath] A kingdom north of Zobah, with a capital of the same name situated on the Orontes. Hamath was one of the kingdoms which were tributary to Solomon, who built cities there (1 Kings iv. 24; 2 Chr. viii. 4). After his death it regained its independence until Jeroboam II. recovered it (2 Kings xiv. 28). A century later it is reckoned among the conquests of Assyria (2 Kings xix. 13). The epithet "great," applied to the city by Amos (ch. vi. 2), attests its importance. A considerable town, retaining the name of *Hamah*, still occupies the site.

10. *Joram*] *Hadoram*, the name given in Chr., is probably the true reading, for which the Hebrew name *Joram* has been substituted by a scribe's error.

to bless him] **To congratulate him**, as in Chr. The phrase there translated "to inquire of his welfare" is identical with that rendered "to salute" here.

Hadadezer had wars with Toi] Lit. "a man of wars of Toi was Hadadezer." *A man of wars* = one who wages wars. Cp. 1 Chr. xxviii. 3.

Joram *brought*, &c.] A valuable present, intended to secure the goodwill of his powerful neighbour. Cp. 1 Kings xv. 18.

with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations
which he subdued; of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children 12
of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of
the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13, 14. *Conquest of Edom.*

And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smit- 13
ing of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen

12. *of Syria*] Chr. and the Sept. agree in reading *Edom* instead of *Aram* (Syria). The two names are easily confused (cp. note on *v.* 3), and it is not easy to decide between them. The order, and the connexion with Moab and Ammon, are in favour of *Edom:* on the other hand Edom has not yet been mentioned, and Syria of Damascus was distinct from Zobah, and might very well be specified in addition to it (*v.* 5).

Amalek] The only allusion to an Amalekite war, unless the spoil taken in the victory of 1 Sam. xxx. 16 ff. is meant.

Chr. omits the rest of the verse.

13, 14. CONQUEST OF EDOM.

13. *gat* him *a name*] Won renown. Cp. ch. vii. 9. This, and not "erected a monument," as some render, is the right meaning.

when he returned from smiting of the Syrians] The text is certainly corrupt. Chr. reads, "And Abishai the son of Zeruiah smote Edom in the valley of salt, (to the number of) eighteen thousand men." The Sept. has, "And David made a name: and as he returned he smote Edom in Gebelem [a corrupt transliteration of the words meaning *valley of salt*] to the number of eighteen thousand." Moreover the Valley of Salt was nowhere in the neighbourhood of Syria, but on the ancient border between Judah and Edom, to the S. of the Dead Sea. It was the scene of Amaziah's victory over the Edomites (2 Kings xiv. 7). We must therefore either adopt the Sept. reading, or insert after *Syrians* the words *and he smote Edom*, which may easily have dropped out, as the second of two similarly ending clauses.

Psalm lx. is referred to this occasion by its title; "Michtam of David. When he fought with Aram of the two rivers [Mesopotamia] and Aram of Zobah, and Joab returned and smote Edom in the Valley of Salt (to the number of) twelve thousand men." The genuineness of this title is disputed, chiefly on the ground that the Psalm speaks of heavy disasters, of which there is no mention in the history. But we should scarcely expect defeat to be chronicled in such an extremely brief summary as the present, which records only the final results of the war. We may conjecture that while David was occupied with his campaign against the Ammonites and Syrians, Edom seized the opportunity for invading the south of Judah, and succeeded in inflicting serious damage, until David sent back part of his forces under Joab or Abishai, and repulsed their attack, following up his victory by the complete subjugation of Edom.

14 thousand *men*. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

15—18. *David's administration and officers.*

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed
16 judgment and justice unto all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son
17 of Ahilud *was* recorder; and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and

We learn further from 1 Kings xi. 15, 16, that the war was pursued with relentless severity, and signal vengeance taken upon the Edomites. That the successful campaign is here attributed to David, in Chr. to Abishai, in the Psalm and in 1 Kings to Joab, need cause no difficulty. David was concerned in it as king, Joab as general of the army, Abishai probably as commander of the division sent forward in advance. The variations as to the number of slain, here put at 18,000, in the Psalm at 12,000, may be due either to a textual error, or to some difference in the mode of reckoning.

14. *garrisons*] See note on *v.* 6. Stress is laid by the words *throughout all Edom* on the completeness with which David subjugated the country. Thus was fulfilled the first part of Isaac's prophecy (Gen. xxvii. 37—40), and Balaam's prophecy (Num. xxiv. 17, 18).

15—18. DAVID'S ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICERS.

A summary notice of the internal administration of the kingdom, with a list of David's chief officers of state, is appended to the account of his wars. Another list of these officers is given in ch. xx. 23—26: on the differences between them see notes there. A similar list of Solomon's officers is to be found in 1 Kings iv. 1—6.

15. *executed judgment and justice*] Proving himself the true representative of Jehovah, whose attributes these are (Ps. xxxiii. 5, lxxxix. 14); and a true type of the perfect Messianic King (Is. ix. 7, xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6).

16. *recorder*] Or, **remembrancer**, a state officer of high rank, who seems not only to have kept a record of events, but to have acted as the king's adviser. His importance is indicated by 2 Kings xviii. 18, 37, where he appears as one of the king's representatives, and 2 Chr. xxxiv. 8, where he is mentioned as one of the commissioners for restoring the Temple. The traveller Chardin describes a similar officer of the Persian court, whose duty it is to furnish the king and his ministers with an account of all important events that take place in the kingdom, and to keep a record of them, and also to register the royal acts and decrees. *Travels*, III., p. 328.

17. *Zadok the son of Ahitub*] Zadok was of the house of Eleazar (1 Chr. vi. 4—8). He joined David at Hebron after Saul's death

Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was* the scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* 18
over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

(1 Chr. xii. 28), and remained faithful to him throughout his reign. In Absalom's rebellion he left Jerusalem along with David, and only returned at his command (2 Sam. xv. 24—29, xvii. 15). Through him David communicated with the elders of Judah concerning his return (ch. xix. 11). Finally, when Abiathar joined the rebellion of Adonijah, Zadok remained faithful to David, took part in the anointing of Solomon, and was made sole high-priest (1 Kings i. 8, 44, ii. 35), which office he held during some part of Solomon's reign (1 Kings iv. 4).

Ahimelech the son of Abiathar] Since Zadok and Abiathar are elsewhere constantly mentioned together as the high-priests in David's reign, and it is clear from 1 Sam. xxii. 20—23 that Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech, and from 1 Kings i., ii. 26 that he held office throughout David's reign, it seems necessary to emend the text and read **Abiathar the son of Ahimelech**. The error, if it is one, appears also in 1 Chr. xviii. 16, xxiv. 3, 6, 31, and must have existed in one of the original documents from which these books were compiled. It seems hardly probable, though not impossible, that the high-priesthood of Abiathar is assumed as known, and only the assistant priests mentioned, who stood in the same relation to him as Hophni and Phinehas to Eli (1 Sam. i. 3): or that Ahimelech officiated for a time as deputy for his father, who was incapacitated by illness or other cause.

priests] Zadok officiated in the Tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chr. xvi. 39), Abiathar probably before the Ark in Jerusalem. On the origin of this double high-priesthood, see preliminary note to ch. vi., p. 88.

Seraiah] Called in 1 Chr. xviii. 16 *Shavsha*, and probably the same as *Sheva* or *Sheya* (2 Sam. xx. 25) and *Shisha* (1 Kings iv. 3).

scribe] Secretary of state: an official mentioned several times in the course of the history: e.g. 2 Kings xii. 10, xviii. 18, 37, xxii. 3, &c.

18. *Benaiah*] See note on ch. xxiii. 20.

was over] *Over* is not in the Heb. text, and must be supplied from Chr. But possibly there is some further defect, for the Sept. reads "Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was counsellor." Cp. note on ch. xxiii. 23.

the Cherethites and the Pelethites] The first reference to these troops, which are mentioned by this name during the reign of David only. They seem to have formed the king's body-guard. See ch. xv. 18, xx. 7, 23; 1 Kings i. 38, 44; 1 Chr. xviii. 17. Two explanations of the names have been proposed: (1) that they mean *executioners* and *runners*, it being the duty of the royal guards to execute sentence (see Gen. xxxvii. 36 *marg.*; 1 Kings ii. 25), and to convey the king's orders from place to place (see 2 Chr. xxx. 6): (2) that they are the names of two Philistine tribes, the body-guard being composed of foreign mercenaries, like the Pope's Swiss guard. In favour of the latter explanation it may be urged (*a*) that the names are gentilic in form; (*b*)

CH. IX. 1—13. *David's kindness to Mephibosheth.*

9 And David said, Is there yet *any* that is left of the house
of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?
2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name
was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the
king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy
3 servant *is he.* And the king said, *Is there* not yet any of
the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God
unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath
4 yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet. And the king said
unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king,
Behold, he *is in* the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel,

that *Cherethites* certainly denotes a Philistine tribe in the other passages where it occurs (1 Sam. xxx. 14; Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5); (*c*) that they are mentioned in conjunction with the Gittites in ch. xv. 18, so that David evidently had some foreign troops in his service, whom he had gathered round him during his residence at Ziklag.

chief rulers] **Ministers.** The word is that usually translated *priest.* It is derived from a root meaning *to serve* or *minister*, and in a few instances denotes a civil not an ecclesiastical minister, the king's confidential adviser. Cp. the paraphrase in 1 Chr. xviii. 17 "chief by the side of the king;" and 1 Kings iv. 5, where the E.V. renders "principal officer."

CH. IX. 1—13. DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH.

Since Mephibosheth was only five years old at the time of his father's death (ch. iv. 4), and now had a young son (*v.* 12), the incident here recorded cannot have occurred till David had been reigning at Jerusalem for some seven years at least, when Mephibosheth would be about 20 years old. The narrative finds a natural place here as an appendix to the general summary of the public history of David's reign, and before the account of his great sin with its fatal consequences. It is omitted in Chronicles as being a matter of private interest.

1. *that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake*] In fulfilment of his oath to Jonathan. See 1 Sam. xx. 14—17, 42.

3. *the kindness of God*] A reference to Jonathan's words in 1 Sam. xx. 14. "The kindness of God" means kindness or mercy such as God shews to men, unfailing, unsought, unlimited. Cp. Luke vi. 36.

lame on his feet] See ch. iv. 4.

Machir the son of Ammiel] A man of wealth and position, to judge from the welcome which he gave David in his flight from Absalom (ch. xvii. 27—29). He may have taken charge of Mephibosheth at Jonathan's death. It may be inferred from his name that he belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (Num. xxxii. 39, 40).

in Lo-debar. Then king David sent, and fet him out of the 5
house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Now 6
when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul,
was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence.
And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold
thy servant. And David said unto him, Fear not: for I 7
will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake,
and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and
thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he 8
bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou
shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am?* Then the 9
king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I
have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul
and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and 10
thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring

Lo-debar] A town on the E. of the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Mahanaim, possibly the same as the *Debir* of Josh. xiii. 26. Its site is not determined.

5. *fet*] This archaic form for *fetched* appears in several passages in the original edition of the E. V. (1611). It is found in Shakespeare:

"On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is *fet* from fathers of war-proof!"
Henry V., A. III. S. I. 18, 19.

6. *Mephibosheth*] See note on ch. iv. 4.

7. *Fear not*] Mephibosheth might be afraid that David had only hunted him out to treat him after the common fashion of Oriental usurpers, who often put all their predecessor's kindred to death. He seems to have lived in concealment at Lo-debar.

the land of Saul thy father] Saul's private estate at Gibeah, which passed into David's possession when he came to the throne (ch. xii. 8). Father = grandfather, as frequently: so in *v.* 9 son = grandson.

thou shalt eat bread at my table] A common mark of honour in Oriental countries. See 1 Kings ii. 7; 2 Kings xxv. 29. The physician Democedes, who cured Darius, was made "a member of the king's table" (ὁμοτράπεζος βασιλέϊ, Herod. III. 132): and Histiaeus of Miletus was invited to come up to Susa, and be Darius' "mess-companion" (σύσσιτος, Herod. V. 24).

8. *he bowed himself*] The same Heb. word as "did reverence" in *v.* 6.

a dead dog] The vilest and most contemptible object possible. See note on ch. iii. 8; and cp. ch. xvi. 9; 1 Sam. xxiv. 14.

10. *shall till the land*] This arrangement suggests that Ziba was already in occupation of the land, so that the only change to him would be that Mephibosheth would now receive the fruits instead of David.

in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.
11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my
12 table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in
13 the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and *was* lame on both his feet.

that thy master's son, &c.] Though Mephibosheth himself was to be a guest at the royal table, he would require the revenues of this estate for the support of his family and household. It may be inferred from the number of Ziba's servants that they would be considerable.

11. *As for Mephibosheth*, said the king] There is nothing to warrant the insertion of the words "said the king:" nor can the words be Ziba's assertion that he would himself have entertained Mephibosheth royally. It remains to follow the LXX. in reading **at David's table** for "at my table," and to take the clause along with the next two verses as the narrator's conclusion of the story, thus: "**So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table, as one of the king's sons.**"

12. *Micha*] He had a numerous posterity. See 1 Chr. viii. 34, ff., where he is called *Micah*.

Ch. X. War with the Ammonites and their allies the Syrians.
= 1 Chron. xix.

David had now reached the summit of his prosperity and power. The historian has now to record how he fell from that height into a sin which brought shame and suffering upon himself and disaster upon his kingdom. This war with the Ammonites is described in detail, because of its close connexion with that act, which marked the fatal turning-point in David's reign.

The war with the Ammonites is incidentally alluded to in ch. viii. 12 among David's other wars; and the war with the Syrians to which it led is not improbably the same as that recorded in ch. viii. 3—6.

It is there related that Hadadezer sustained a crushing defeat, and that a great part of his vassals transferred their allegiance to David. There is no hint here that they had revolted, and it seems unlikely that they could have raised so large an army on a second occasion. The circumstances narrated here (*v.* 16) explain the otherwise obscure mention of the Euphrates in ch. viii. 3: the seat of war, the persons engaged, the results, and the general details, are so similar as to make it at least improbable that the narratives refer to two distinct wars.

It is easy to assign a reason for this repetition. There the account

Ch. X. *War with the Ammonites and their allies the Syrians.*

1—5. *David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites.*

And it came to pass after this, that the king of the chil- 10
dren of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his
stead. Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun 2
the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me.
And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants
for his father. And David's servants came *into* the land of
the children of Ammon. And the princes of the children 3
of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that
David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters
unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto
thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow
it? Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved 4
off the *one* half of their beards, and cut off their garments in

forms part of the collected summary of David's principal wars, as it was probably by far the most important and most distant of them: here it appears as a necessary pendant to the history of the Ammonite war, which is being related in full in order to lead up to and explain the circumstances of David's fall.

1—5. David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites.

1. *And it came to pass after this*] On this formula of transition see note on ch. viii. 1.

the king of the children of Ammon] Forty years at least had passed since the events of 1 Sam. xi., so that this Nahash was probably the son or grandson of the king defeated by Saul at Jabesh. On the Ammonites see note on 1 Sam. xi. 1.

Hanun] This name is identical with the Phoenician *Hanno*, which appears so frequently in Carthaginian history. In Greek both take the form Ἄννων (*Annon*).

2. *as his father shewed kindness unto me*] Possibly in the course of David's wanderings: possibly by a congratulatory embassy on his accession (cp. 1 Kings v. 1): according to a Jewish tradition by receiving one of his brothers, who escaped when his parents were murdered by the king of Moab.

3. *the princes of the children of Ammon*] The new king's counsellors were as foolish as Rehoboam's advisers (1 Kings xii. 10, 11). Their unjust suspicions of David's motives may have been excited by his recent conquest of Moab.

the city] Rabbah, which was strongly fortified. See ch. xi. 1.

4. *shaved off the one half of their beards*] Compare the story in Herodotus of the thief who made some guards drunk, and for an insult

the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.
5 When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6—14. *Defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies.*

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty

shaved their right cheeks (II. 121). No grosser insult could have been devised. The beard was and still is to an Oriental the badge of the dignity of manhood. It was only shaved as a sign of the deepest mourning. See Is. xv. 2; Jer. xli. 5. "Cutting off a person's beard is regarded by the Arabs as an indignity equal to flogging and branding among ourselves. Many would rather die than have their beard shaved off." D'Arvieux' *Customs of the Bedouin Arabs.* A similar occurrence is said to have taken place in modern times. "In 1764 Kerim Khan, a pretender to the Persian throne, sent ambassadors to Mir Mahenna, the prince of Bendervigk, on the Persian Gulf, to demand tribute from him; but he in return cut off the ambassadors' beards. Kerim Khan was so enraged at this that he went the next year with a large army to make war upon this prince, and took the city, and almost the whole of his territory, to avenge the insult." Niebuhr's *Description of Arabia.*

cut off their garments] The ambassadors, who wore long dignified garments, were sent away in the shameful plight of captives. See Is. xx. 4.

5. *Tarry at Jericho*] Jericho was on their direct way back to Jerusalem. David wished to spare them the mortification of returning to Jerusalem in such a ridiculous plight.

6—14. DEFEAT OF THE AMMONITES AND THEIR SYRIAN ALLIES.

6. *that they stank*] Lit. *that they had made themselves stink:* had brought themselves into evil odour, or, made themselves odious. Ancient history records many wars undertaken to avenge insults offered to ambassadors, whose persons have always been considered sacred by the law of nations: e.g. the war between Rome and Tarentum which led to the invasion of Italy by Pyrrhus. See also Cicero, *pro lege Manil.* c. 5.

hired] For a thousand talents of silver according to 1 Chr. xix. 6, a sum variously estimated at from £250,000 to £500,000. For other instances of the employment of mercenary troops see 2 Kings vii. 6; 2 Chron. xxv. 6.

Beth-rehob] Beth-rehob (=*house of Rehob*) or Rehob (*v.* 8), the capital of this Syrian kingdom, can hardly be the Beth-rehob near Dan mentioned in Jud. xviii. 28, which was in Israelite territory. It is

thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men. And when David 7
heard *of it*, he sent Joab, and all the host *of* the mighty *men*. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the 8
battle in array *at* the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians

better to place it at *Ruhaibeh*, 25 miles N.E. of Damascus, or to identify it with *Rehoboth by the river* (Gen. xxxvi. 37), the site of which is fixed a few miles below the junction of the Chaboras with the Euphrates. In this case the Mesopotamians mentioned in the parallel passage in 1 Chron. may be the same as the Syrians of Beth-rehob.

the Syrians of Zoba] See note on ch. viii. 3.

and of king Maacah] Rather, **and the king of Maacah.** This small Syrian kingdom was in the neighbourhood of Geshur, adjoining the province of Argob in the north-east of Bashan (Deut. iii. 14), somewhere to the east of the wild and rocky region now called *El-Lejah*. Some however would place it on the south-west slope of Hermon at the sources of the Jordan. See notes on Josh. xii. 5, xiii. 13.

and of Ish-tob] Rather, **and the men of Tob**, the district in which Jephthah took refuge (Jud. xi. 3). It seems to have been somewhere north or east of Gilead, between Syria and the country of the Ammonites.

The text of Chronicles differs from that of Samuel in several points. (*a*) It mentions the price paid to the Syrians, a thousand talents of silver, and names Medeba as the rendezvous where their forces assembled. (*b*) The names of the countries from which the mercenaries were drawn are given as Mesopotamia, Maacah, and Zobah. Beth-rehob may be included under Mesopotamia (*v.* 6, note). Tob is not mentioned; perhaps it was a dependency of Zobah, and is included under it. The contingent sent by each is not specified. (*c*) The total number of 32,000 besides the men of Maacah, agrees with the numbers here; but the reading *chariots* in the present text of 1 Chr. xix. 7 can scarcely be right. 32,000 chariots would be a force of unexampled magnitude. See 1 Kings x. 26; 2 Chron. xii. 3, xiv. 9. The text of Samuel also seems to be defective, as the force doubtless had some cavalry and chariots and did not consist of infantry only.

7. *all the host of the mighty men*] Lit. *all the host, the mighty men.* Elsewhere "the mighty men" appear to be distinguished from the main body of the army as a corps of picked warriors, (see note on ch. xv. 18); and we should perhaps read *all the host, and the mighty men.*

8. *at the entering in of the gate*] This is generally supposed to be the gate of the Ammonite capital Rabbah. But the account in Chronicles states explicitly that the Syrian mercenaries mustered at Medeba, which was nearly 20 miles south-west of Rabbah, and clearly implies that it was the city which the Ammonites occupied. Further it is evident from *v.* 9, which describes Joab as in danger of being crushed between the two forces, that the Syrians were at no great dis

of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah, *were* by
9 themselves in the field. When Joab saw that the front of
the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of
all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against
10 the Syrians: and the rest of the people he delivered into the
hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array
11 against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians
be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the
children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come
12 and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the
men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the
13 LORD do that which seemeth him good. And Joab drew

tance from the city. And how came the Syrian force to march past Rabbah to Medeba, if the Ammonites meant to make their stand at Rabbah? or how could Joab possibly have advanced to Rabbah, leaving this huge Syrian force in his rear?

Medeba, the modern *Mâdeba*, was four miles south-east of Heshbon, on a rounded but rocky hill. It existed before the Israelite conquest (Num. xxi. 30), was assigned to Reuben (Josh. xiii. 9), and now seems to have been in the hands of the Ammonites. It is mentioned on the famous Moabite stone as having been recaptured by Mesha, and in the time of Isaiah was a Moabite sanctuary (Is. xv. 2).

in the field] "The plain of Medeba" (Josh. xiii. 9, 16) would be an advantageous place for the manœuvres of a large army, especially with chariots and cavalry.

9. *that the front of the battle was against him before and behind*] The Ammonites were posted in front of the city, the Syrians on the plain opposite to them: if he attacked either force separately, his rear would be exposed to the other. His choice of the picked men to attack the Syrians, and his taking command of this division in person, indicate that the mercenary troops were the most formidable part of the Ammonite force.

10. *that he might put* them *in array*] Rather, **and he put them in array.**

12. *Be of good courage, and let us play the men*] Lit. **Be strong and let us shew ourselves strong**: the same words as those translated in 1 Chr. xix. 13 "Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly."

for the cities of our God] As the people of Israel were the people of the LORD, so the land which He had given them was His, and its cities were His. They were fighting "the LORD'S battles," that these cities might not fall into heathen hands and be given over to the worship of heathen gods. Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 47, xviii. 17.

the LORD *do that which seemeth him good*] Better, **Jehovah will do**, &c.: an expression of trust combined with resignation to God's will. Cp. 1 Sam. iii. 18.

nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. And when 14
the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, *then* fled they *also* before Abishai, and entered *into* the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came *to* Jerusalem.

15—19. *Renewed attack of the Syrians. Their total defeat.*

And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before 15
Israel, they gathered themselves together. And Hadarezer 16
sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came *to* Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them. And when it was 17
told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set *themselves* in array against David, and fought with him. And 18
the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who

13. *they fled before him*] "They that are hired to fight generally have a great care to save themselves, having no regard to the cause for which they fight." Patrick.

14. *then fled they also*] The rout of their allies left Joab free to help Abishai, and the Ammonites retired at once within the walls of the city.

So Joab returned] He did not attempt a siege, most likely because the season was too far advanced. Cp. ch. xi. 1.

15—19. RENEWED ATTACK OF THE SYRIANS. THEIR TOTAL DEFEAT.

16. *And Hadarezer sent*, &c.] The correct form of his name is probably *Hadadezer*. See note on ch. viii. 3. He now mustered his vassals and tributaries (*v.* 19) from beyond "the river," i.e. the Euphrates. "Brought out"=caused to take the field: it is the causative voice of the verb "to go out," which is the technical term for going out to war (1 Sam. viii. 20; 2 Sam. xi. 1).

and they came to Helam] The words might be translated *and their force came;* but on the whole it is preferable to take *Helam* as a proper name, as in *v.* 17. It has been proposed to identify it with *Alamata*, a town west of the Euphrates, but it is nowhere else mentioned, and its site is quite uncertain. This clause is omitted in Chronicles, where also in place of *and came to Helam* in the next verse we read *and came upon them*, so that the name of the place is altogether omitted there.

18. *seven hundred chariots...forty thousand horsemen*] The present text of Chronicles has *seven thousand chariots...forty thousand footmen.*

19 died there. And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

CH. XI. 1. *The siege of Rabbah.*

11 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and beseiged Rabbah. But David tarried *still* at Jerusalem.

It seems best to retain the reading *seven hundred chariots*, and follow Chronicles in reading *footmen*. But the omission of *horsemen* in the one and *footmen* in the other makes it likely that there is some further corruption.

19. *the kings* that were *servants to Hadarezer*] His vassals and tributaries transferred their allegiance to David. According to ch. viii. 6 (assuming it to refer to the same war), the kingdom of Damascus was completely subjugated and secured by military stations. Both there and here it is implied that Hadadezer himself still maintained his independence in Zobah.

CH. XI. 1. THE SIEGE OF RABBAH.
=1 Chr. xx. 1.

1. *after the year was expired*] Better, **at the return of the year**: that is when spring set in with the commencement of the year in the month Abib or Nisan. Cp. 1 Kings xx. 22, 26; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10. If Joab's return to Jerusalem (ch. x. 14) was due to the lateness of the season, the next year was probably occupied with the Syrian campaign, and the expedition against Rabbah did not take place until the year after it.

at the time when kings go forth to battle] At the time of year when kings were accustomed to reopen the campaign after the winter cessation of hostilities.

destroyed the children of Ammon] The parallel passage in 1 Chr. xx. 1 gives the right explanation, "wasted the country of the children of Ammon." While Rabbah was besieged, the country was ravaged.

Rabbah] *Rabbah* (=the great city), or more fully *Rabbah of the children of Ammon* (ch. xii. 26), the capital of the Ammonites, was situated in a strong position about 22 miles east of the Jordan, on a branch of the valley of the Jabbok. It consisted of the lower town, called "the city of waters" (ch. xii. 27), from the perennial stream which has its source in it; and the citadel, a place of great strength, built on a hill rising abruptly on the north side of the lower town (ch. xii. 28, 29). We are not told whether the city was destroyed on its capture. If so, it was afterwards rebuilt (Am. i. 14), and was a place of importance at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion (Jer. xlix. 2, 3; Ezek. xxi. 20).

2—5. *David's adultery with Bath-sheba.*

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose 2
from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's

Its name was changed to Philadelpheia by Ptolemy Philadelphus in the third century B. C., and down to the fourth century A. D. it continued to be famous. For a description of the ruins, which give proof of the magnificence and wealth of the city during the later period of its existence, see Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 533 ff.; Oliphant's *Land of Gilead*, p. 251 ff.

David tarried still at Jerusalem] Exposing himself to the temptations of idleness. So Ovid writes:

"Quaeritur Aegisthus quare sit factus adulter?
In promptu causa est; desidiosus erat."

2—5. DAVID'S ADULTERY WITH BATH-SHEBA.

It is one object of Holy Scripture to paint sin in its true colours. No friendly flattery, no false modesty, draws a veil over this dark scene in David's life. It is recorded as a warning (1 Cor. x. 11, 12), that even holy men may yield to temptation and fall into gross sin; that one sin almost inevitably leads to others; that sin, even when repented of, brings punishment in its train.

With stern simplicity the inspired prophet-historian describes how "the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (James i. 15). The king who but a few years before had sung of "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. xxiv. 4), and vowed to exclude from his palace all workers of deceit (Ps. ci. 7) is dragged by his passion into meanness, ingratitude, dissimulation, treachery, murder. "These things were written for our admonition... Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 11, 12).

But if the history is a stern record of the enthralling power and the inevitable consequences of sin, it is no less a testimony to the liberating power of repentance. "Sicut lapsus David cautos facit eos qui non ceciderunt, sic desperatos esse non vult qui ceciderunt" (Augustine on Ps. li.): or in the words of Bishop Hall: "How can we presume of not sinning, or despair for sinning, when we find so great a saint thus fallen, thus risen."

It is the necessary key to the history of the rest of David's reign. It explains the sudden overclouding of his life; the change from triumph and prosperity to sorrow and failure. See further in the Introduction, ch. VI. § 10, p. 36, and § 16, p. 41.

This narrative is altogether omitted in the Book of Chronicles, for reasons which are explained in the Introduction, ch. III. p. 22.

2. *arose from off his bed*] In the cool of the afternoon, after his midday siesta. Cp. ch. iv. 5.

walked upon the roof] The flat roofs of Oriental houses "afford a most delightful promenade....During a large part of the year the roof is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the

house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing *herself;*
3 and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. And
David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said,
Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of
4 Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took
her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for
she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned
5 unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and
told David, and said, I *am* with child.

6—13. *Uriah summoned to Jerusalem.*

6 And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the

morning and the evening." Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, p. 39. David's palace on Mount Zion (ch. v. 9) commanded a view of Uriah's house, which was in the Lower City (*v.* 8, *go down*).

3. *Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam*] In 1 Chr. iii. 5 she is called *Bath-shua, the daughter of Ammiel*. *Eliam* (=God of the people) and *Ammiel* (=people of God) are compounded of the same words placed in different order. If this Eliam was the same as Uriah's brother-officer, mentioned in ch. xxiii. 34, Bath-sheba was the grand-daughter of David's counsellor Ahithophel. This, it has been thought, explains Ahithophel's adherence to Absalom (ch. xv. 12) as an act of revenge for the seduction of his grand-daughter and the murder of her husband. The theory has been well worked out with much ingenuity by Prof. Blunt (*Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 135 ff.), but must be regarded as very doubtful: for (1) the identity of Eliam the son of Ahithophel with Eliam the father of Bath-sheba cannot be proved; (2) even if the relationship is granted, an ambitious and unscrupulous man such as Ahithophel would be more likely to regard the elevation of his grand-daughter to the position of the king's favourite wife as an honour, than to feel aggrieved at the circumstances by which it was effected.

Uriah the Hittite] One of David's "mighty men" (ch. xxiii. 39). His name (=light of Jah) indicates that although he was a Canaanite by race, he had adopted the Jewish religion. Another Hittite in David's service was Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxvi. 6). On the ancient Canaanite nation of the Hittites, see note on 1 Sam. xxvi. 6.

4. *David sent messengers*] Bath-sheba cannot be acquitted from blame, for it does not appear that she offered any resistance. Vanity and ambition prevailed over the voice of conscience. "Cupido dominandi cunctis affectibus flagrantior est." "The lust of power burns more fiercely than any other passion" (Tac. *Ann.* xv. 53).

5. *sent and told David*] That he might devise some plan to shield her from the consequences of her sin; for by the Mosaic law she was liable to be put to death (Lev. xx. 10). David accordingly sent for Uriah, in the hope that his return to his wife might cover the shame of his own crime.

Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when 7
Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how
Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war pros-
pered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, 8
and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's
house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king.
But Uriah slept *at* the door of the king's house with all the 9
servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. And 10
when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down
unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not
from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto
thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and 11
Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and

6—13. Uriah summoned to Jerusalem.

7. *David demanded*, &c.] David sent for Uriah ostensibly to bring him word about the progress of the war. Uriah, as one of the "mighty men," no doubt held some command in the army.

demanded] Rather, **asked.** The use of *demand*, like Fr. *demander*, meaning simply 'to ask,' is an archaism.

8. *wash thy feet*] An indispensable refreshment after a journey in the East, where sandals only were worn. Cp. Gen. xviii. 4, xliii. 24; Luke vii. 44.

a mess of meat *from the king*] A portion from the king's table as a mark of honour for his faithful servant. Cp. Gen. xliii. 34.

9. *Uriah slept at the door of the king's house*] Probably in the guard chamber in the outer court. Cp. 1 Kings xiv. 27, 28.

10. *Camest thou not from thy journey*] Better, **Art not thou come from a journey?** David expresses surprise and displeasure that Uriah had not done as men usually do on their return from a journey, and gone to his own home. Uriah's brave resolution not to enjoy the comforts of his home even for a single night, while his comrades were enduring the hardships of a campaign, bade fair to frustrate David's scheme for concealing his sin. He may too have had some suspicion of his wife's unfaithfulness.

11. *The ark*] These wars were "the wars of Jehovah" (see note on ch. x. 12), and the Ark had been taken along with the army as the symbol of His presence and favour. Cp. Josh. vi. 6; 1 Sam. iv. 3, xiv. 18 (but see note there); 2 Sam. xv. 24.

Israel, and Judah] The description of the nation as "Israel and Judah" marks the tendency to isolation on the part of Judah, which had been confirmed by the separation in the early part of David's reign, and prepared the way for the permanent division of the kingdoms. See note on 1 Sam. xi. 8, and Introd. ch. I. § 5 (*d*), p. 13.

tents] Properly, **booths**, rough shelters or huts extemporised out of the boughs of trees.

the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I
12 will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So
13 Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

14—17. *David's letter to Joab. Uriah's death.*

14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote
15 a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be
16 smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab ob-

as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth] This form of oath does not occur elsewhere. We usually have either "as the LORD liveth" (ch. iv. 9), or "as thy soul liveth" (ch. xiv. 19), or the two combined (1 Sam. xx. 3). Possibly "as thou livest" is a textual error for "as the LORD liveth." The Sept. reads *How? as thy soul liveth*, &c.

13. *and he made him drunk*] In the hope that he might forget his oath and break his resolution not to go home. But this plan also failed. "The Providence of God is here manifest, defeating David's base contrivances, and bringing his sin to the open light. It is no less clear how mercy was at the bottom of this severity which issued in David's deep repentance, and has also given to the Church one of the most solemn and searching warnings as to the evil of sin which is contained in the whole Bible." *Speaker's Comm.*

14—17. DAVID'S LETTER TO JOAB. URIAH'S DEATH.

14. *sent it by the hand of Uriah*] So in the Greek story Proetus sent Bellerophon to Jobates with his own death-warrant. Cp. Hom. *Il.* VI. 168, 169.

> "Slay him he would not, that his soul abhorred;
> But to the father of his wife, the king
> Of Lycia, sent him forth, with tokens charged
> Of dire import, on folded tablets traced,
> Poisoning the monarch's mind to work his death."

15. *that he may be smitten, and die*] So blinded was David by his passion, and so eager to screen himself and Bath-sheba from the disgrace of exposure, that he did not shrink from plotting the murder of one of

served the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. And the men of the city 17
went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18—25. *News of Uriah's death carried to David.*

Then Joab sent and told David all the things con- 18
cerning the war; and charged the messenger, saying, 19
When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, and if so be that the king's wrath 20
arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye *so* nigh unto the city when *ye* did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son 21
of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why

his bravest soldiers. The King's command was sufficient warrant to Joab, without inquiry into the reason for it.

16. *when Joab observed the city*] Better, as Joab watched the city, i.e. besieged it.

a place where he knew that valiant men were] Uriah was posted opposite the most strongly guarded part of the city, where the fighting was likely to be fiercest in case of a sally.

17. *went out*] Made a sally, in which, as the messenger describes (*vv.* 23, 24), the men of Israel imprudently pursued the enemy till they were within shot of the archers on the wall, and suffered considerable loss.

18—25. News of Uriah's death carried to David.

19. *the matters of the war*] The same Heb. phrase as that translated in *v.* 18 "the things concerning the war."

20. *if so be that the king's wrath arise*] Joab assumes that David would find fault with him for bad generalship, until he knew that his commission was executed by Uriah's death.

21. *Who smote Abimelech*] See Jud. ix. 50—54. This reference is interesting, as shewing a familiarity with the history of the time of the Judges; but whether it was preserved by written annals or by oral tradition, is uncertain. It is not likely that our Book of Judges was in existence in its present form.

Jerubbesheth] Jerubbaal or Gideon (Jud. vi. 32). The form *Jerubbesheth* occurs here only. The Sept. reads *Jerubbaal*, and this was perhaps the original reading, altered for the reasons stated in the note to ch. ii. 8.

in Thebez] Only mentioned here and in Judges, but its site and

went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah
22 the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went, and came
23 and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us *into* the field, and we were upon
24 them *even* unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite
25 is dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle *more* strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26, 27. *Bath-sheba becomes David's wife.*

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband
27 was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the

name are both preserved by the village of *Tubâs*, about ten miles N. E. of Shechem.

22. The Sept. reads this verse as follows: "And Joab's messenger went to the king to Jerusalem. And he came and told David all that Joab had told him, even all the things concerning the war. And David was wroth with Joab, and said unto the messenger, Wherefore did ye approach unto the city to fight? Knew ye not that ye would be struck from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman cast upon him a piece of a millstone from the wall, and he died in Thebez? Wherefore did ye approach unto the wall?" Such a repetition may have formed part of the original text. But it is somewhat strange that Joab should anticipate the illustration which the king would use: and it is possible that the reference to Abimelech originally occurred in David's speech only, and was transferred by mistake to that of Joab also, and finally in the revision of the Hebrew text omitted in the second place, instead of in the first, as it should have been.

23. *we were upon them*] Or, **against them**: we repulsed the sally, and pursued them to the gate of the city.

25. *the sword devoureth*] Cp. the phrase "the mouth (E.V. *edge*) of the sword" (1 Sam. xv. 8).

encourage thou him] This is certainly the right rendering. That of the LXX., *and take it*, which follows a slightly different text, is contrary to the usage of the verb.

26, 27. Bath-sheba becomes David's wife.

26. *she mourned for her husband*] Seven days was the usual period of mourning. See Gen. l. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; Judith xvi. 24; Ecclus. xxii. 12. In exceptional cases thirty days were observed. See Num.

mourning was past, David sent and fet her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

CH. XII. 1—6. *Nathan's Parable.*

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came 12
unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one
city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had 2
exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor *man* had 3
nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and
nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with
his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his
own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a
daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, 4

xx. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 8. No special time seems to have been prescribed for widows. There is no indication that Bath-sheba's mourning was more than a formal ceremony.

27. *fet her*] See note on ch. ix. 5.

But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD] The divine sentence on David's conduct prepares the way for the mission of Nathan in the next chapter.

CH. XII. 1—6. NATHAN'S PARABLE.

1. *the* LORD *sent Nathan*] A year had passed, and Bath-sheba's child had been born, before Nathan was sent to rouse the king's slumbering conscience.

To this crisis belong Psalms li. and xxxii. See Introd. ch. VIII. § 5, p. 47.

and said unto him] Some MSS of the Vulg. add *Give me a judgment.* The words cannot be regarded as part of the original text, though they are a correct gloss. The prophet asks for the king's decision, as though he were consulting him about a case which had really happened. Compare the plan adopted by the widow of Tekoah (ch. xiv. 4—7); and by the prophet sent to rebuke Ahab (1 Kings xx. 35—41). Other parables are found in the O. T. in Jud. ix. 7—15; 2 Kings xiv. 9; Is. v. 1, 2.

2. *The rich man*, &c.] Observe how the details of the parable are all arranged so as to bring the heartless selfishness of the rich man into the strongest relief.

3. *of his own meat*] **Of his own morsel.** The E.V. misses something of the graphic tenderness of the original, describing how the lamb actually shared the poor man's meal.

4. "The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb...ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin; not its sensuality or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfish-

and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man
5 that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely
6 die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7—14. *The Prophet's sentence. David's confession.*

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;
8 and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been too* little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

ness...A true description of a real incident, if like in its general character however unlike to our own case in all the surrounding particulars, strikes home with greater force than the sternest personal invective." Stanley's *Lect.* II. 90.

5. *shall surely die*] Or, **is worthy to die**; lit. *is a son of death*. Cp. 1 Sam. xx. 31, xxvi. 16.

6. *fourfold*] The legal compensation. See Ex. xxii. 1; Luke xix. 8. The Sept. reads *sevenfold*, and this may be the original reading. David in his indignation would be likely to prescribe a more liberal restitution than the usual fourfold. Cp. Prov. vi. 31.

7—14. THE PROPHET'S SENTENCE. DAVID'S CONFESSION.

7. *Thou* art *the man*] The consciousness that they were God's messengers inspired the prophets with fearless courage. Samuel rebuked Saul for his disobedience: the prophet from Judah reproved Jeroboam for his idolatry: Elijah pronounced sentence on Ahab for his murder of Naboth: Isaiah chid Ahaz for his faithlessness: John the Baptist condemned Herod for his adultery.

I anointed thee, &c.] God's successive favours to David are enumerated, to bring out the baseness of his ingratitude and the folly of his sin.

8. *thy master's house*] His household and property. Cp. ch. ix. 7.

thy master's wives] It was lawful for the King, and for him only, to marry his predecessor's wives. See note on ch. iii. 7. That David actually married any of Saul's wives does not appear. Only one wife (1 Sam. xiv. 50) and one concubine (2 Sam. iii. 7) of Saul's are mentioned.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the 9
LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah
the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be
thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children
of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart 10
from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and hast
taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus 11
saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out
of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine
eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie
with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst *it* 12
secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before
the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned 13
against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The

9. *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the* LORD] Cp. Num. xv. 31; 1 Sam. xv. 23, 26. Great as was David's sin against Uriah and Bath-sheba, his sin against God was greater in thus breaking two express commandments of the decalogue. Cp. Ps. li. 4.

and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon] This is not a mere repetition of the clause "thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword." The verb is stronger, "thou hast murdered;" and the offence is shewn to have been aggravated by the employment of the Ammonites, the enemies of God's people, as the instruments for its commission.

10. *the sword shall never depart from thine house*] The Heb. word for *never* is a relative term, which must be explained by the context. Here it may be understood as equivalent to "all the days of thy life." Cp. 1 Sam. i. 22, xxvii. 12. The prophecy was fulfilled by Amnon's murder (ch. xiii. 28); Absalom's death as a rebel (ch. xviii. 14); and Adonijah's execution as a traitor (1 Kings ii. 25). In all these deeds may be traced the bitter fruit of David's sin. Amnon no doubt excused his lust by alleging his father's example: Absalom's rebellion was indirectly the consequence of Amnon's act: Adonijah died for presuming to appear as the rival of Bath-sheba's son.

11. *I will take thy wives*] See ch. xvi. 21, 22. "Having become the man of blood, of blood he was to drink deep; and having become the man of lust, by that same baneful passion in others was he himself to be scourged for ever." Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 134.

13. *I have sinned against the* LORD] True confession needs but few words. Cp. Lk. xviii. 13. There is no attempt to excuse or palliate the sin. Saul too could say "I have sinned" (1 Sam. xv. 24, 30), but he felt no real contrition, and his chief desire was to save his own reputation with the people: David is crushed by the sense of his guilt in the sight of God. Cp. Ps. xxxii. 5, li. 4. Cp. August. *c. Faustum*, xxii. 67. "In simili voce quam sensus humanus audiebat, dissimile pectus

14 LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

15—23. *The Death of the Child.*

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD strake the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it
16 was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the
17 earth. And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither

erat quod divinus oculus discernebat." "Though the words heard by the human ear were alike, the heart seen by the eye of God was unlike." See Keble's poem for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity in the *Christian Year*.

thou shalt not die] The sentence which he had pronounced on himself (*v.* 5) should not be executed, though he deserved to die as an adulterer and murderer (Lev. xx. 10, xxiv. 17). The punishment of death would certainly not have been inflicted on the king, who was supreme in the state, by any human authority: but God might Himself have inflicted it. The context shews that temporal death is primarily meant, and though we may now read in the words a reference to spiritual life and death, it may be doubted whether they could be so understood at the time.

14. *thou hast given great occasion*, &c.] The enemies of Jehovah would mock and blaspheme Him, when they saw His chosen representative, the King of Israel, thus breaking His law. To divorce Bathsheba now would be a further wrong. Yet if he was not punished men might answer yes to the question "May one be pardoned and retain the offence?" And therefore a long series of chastisements, beginning with the death of the child, must unequivocally declare the divine judgment on such sin.

15—23. THE DEATH OF THE CHILD.

15. *strake*] An archaism for *struck*. Cp. ch. xx. 10.

16. *besought God for the child*] Such a prayer was not presumptuous, for God's threatenings like his promises are conditional. See Is. xxxviii. 1 ff.; Jonah iii. 7—10.

fasted] Cp. Neh. i. 4; Esther iv. 16; Dan. ix. 3; Acts xiv. 23.

went in] To his private chamber (Matt. vi. 6), where he lay all night upon the floor, instead of sleeping on his bed. Cp. ch. xiii. 31. The tense of the verbs *went in and lay all night* is frequentative, indicating that David did so repeatedly.

17. *the elders of his house*] His oldest and most confidential servants. Cp. Gen. xxiv. 2, l. 7.

did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the 18
seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David
feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said,
Behold, while the child was *yet* alive, we spake unto him,
and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he
then vex himself, if we tell him *that* the child is dead? But 19
when David saw that his servants whispered, David per-
ceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto
his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is
dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and 20
anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came *into*
the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to
his own house; and when he required, they set bread before
him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, 21
What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast
and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the
child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, 22
While the child *was* yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said,
Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the
child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I 23
fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but
he shall not return to me.

24, 25. *The birth of Solomon.*

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in 24
unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he
called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him. And 25

20. *washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel*] He laid aside all the outward signs of mourning. Cp. Matt. vi. 17.

anointed himself] Anointing the head and body with oil was and still is the regular practice in Eastern countries. It was believed to contribute to health and cleanliness. Its discontinuance was a mark of mourning. Cp. ch. xiv. 2; Is. lxi. 3.

22. *GOD*] **The LORD**. The Heb. is Jehovah, not Elohim, as is indicated by the capital letters. Cp. Gen. vi. 5.

23. *I shall go to him*] Cp. Gen. xxxvii. 35. A belief in the continued existence of the soul after death in a state of consciousness is necessarily implied though not expressly stated: but how far this falls short of the Christian hope of the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting!

24, 25. THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON.

24. *he called his name Solomon*] The name was given at the time

he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

26—31. *Capture of Rabbah.*

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Am-
27 mon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have
28 taken the city of waters. Now therefore gather the rest of

of circumcision (Lk. i. 59, ii. 21). The Hebrew form of the name is *Shĕlômôh*, the Sept. Salômôn, which by the time of the N.T. had become shortened to the familiar Solomon. It signifies *peaceable*, and was given him in anticipation of the peace and quietness promised to Israel in his reign in contrast to his father's wars (1 Chron. xxii. 9). Solomon's birth is naturally related as the sequel to the preceding narrative, though in all probability it did not take place until some four or five years afterwards. See Introd. ch. IV. § 3, p. 26, and note on ch. v. 14.

25. *he sent by the hand of Nathan*, &c.] Jehovah commissioned Nathan (for the phrase cp. Ex. iv. 13) to give the boy a second name, which he did accordingly. This is the meaning of the text as it stands: but some commentators would alter it slightly in accordance with the Vulgate, and render *he* (David) *committed him to the hand of Nathan*, that he might take charge of his education. But the explanation is doubtful, and there is no further trace of the fact, though it has been very generally supposed that Nathan was Solomon's tutor.

Jedidiah] That is *Beloved of Jah*. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 12; Ps. cxxvii. 2. It is derived from the same root as David, which means *beloved* or *darling*. The name was given "because of the LORD," i. e. because Jehovah loved the child; and it served as a pledge to David that he was again fully received into God's favour.

26—31. CAPTURE OF RABBAH.
= 1 Chron. xx. 1—3.

26. *And Joab fought against Rabbah*] The narrative returns to the point at which it was left in ch. xi. 1. But how long a time was occupied in the siege does not appear. It is possible that it lasted more than one year, and did not come to an end till after the birth of Bath-sheba's first child. But on the other hand it would be quite natural for the historian, having once commenced his account of Bath-sheba, to complete it before narrating the capture of Rabbah, so that this may have been effected within a year.

and took the royal city] "The royal city" seems to be equivalent to "the city of waters" of *v.* 27, that is, the lower city on the river, as distinguished from "the city" (*v.* 28), i.e. the citadel. The capture of this probably deprived the citadel of its water-supply, and so rendered it untenable for any length of time.

27. *the city of waters*] "Just before reaching *Ammân* [the modern

the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to 29
Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he took 30
their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought forth the people that 31
were therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows

name of Rabbah], the gorge takes a sudden turn to the north, and then swells into a narrow plain, covered with luxuriant grass, and embosomed in low round hills. The fish-stocked stream, with shells studding every stone and pebble, winds in the midst, a narrow channel, receiving occasional affluents in its course, and making Rabbah most truly a 'city of waters.'" Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 533.

28. *and take it*] Curtius relates how Craterus in like manner resigned the capture of Artacacna into the hands of Alexander. "After all the preparations were made, he awaited the king's arrival, yielding to him, as was fitting, the honour of taking the city" (Curt. vi. 6).

and it be called after my name] This is the usual meaning of the phrase. Rabbah might have been called "the city of Joab" as Zion was called "the city of David."

30. *their king's crown*] The word *Malcham*, rendered *their king*, may also be taken as a proper name. It occurs in Zeph. i. 5; Jer. xlix. 1, 3 (marg.), as a form of the name of the Ammonite deity, Moloch or Milcom. The Sept. now reads *Molchom their king*, "their king" being probably a gloss, and "Molchom" the original reading. A Jewish tradition recorded by Jerome tells how the crown was snatched from the head of Milcom by Ittai the Gittite, because it was unlawful for a Hebrew to take spoil from an idol (*Quaest. Hebr.* on 1 Chron. xx. 2). But while it was natural for David to take and wear the king's crown, as the symbol of the subjection of the Ammonites to his rule, would he not have regarded the idol's crown with abhorrence, and have shrunk from wearing it?

a talent of gold] Estimated at more than 100 pounds. If this estimate is correct, it can never have been habitually worn, and must have been placed on David's head for a few moments only.

31. *put them under saws*] **Put them upon saws**: or perhaps we should read as in Chron., **sawed them with saws**. Cp. Heb. xi. 37. This barbarous practice was not unknown at Rome. "[Caligula] medios serra dissecuit." (Sueton. *Calig.* 27.)

harrows of iron] **Threshing-sledges of iron**: sledges or frames armed on the underside with rollers or sharp spikes, used for the purpose of bruising the ears of corn, and extracting the grain, and at the same time breaking up the straw into small pieces for use as fodder. See Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, i. 408, ii. 423.

of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned *unto* Jerusalem.

Ch. XIII. 1—22. *Amnon's shameful outrage.*

13 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and

made them pass through the brick-kiln] Burned them in brick-kilns. The phrase is chosen with reference to the idolatrous rite practised by the Ammonites, of "making their children pass through the fire" in honour of Moloch (2 Kings xxiii. 10). This is the meaning of the *Qrî* or read text (see Introd. p. 15), which is probably correct. The *Kthîbh* or written text however has "made them pass through the *Malchan*," which is explained to mean the place where they burnt their children in honour of Moloch. But the word occurs nowhere else, and is of doubtful authority.

These cruel punishments must be judged according to the standard of the age in which they were inflicted, not by the light of Christian civilisation. The Ammonites were evidently a savage and brutal nation (1 Sam. xi. 1, 2; 2 Sam. x. 1—5; Amos i. 13), and in all probability they were treated no worse than they were accustomed to treat others. It was the age of retaliation, when the law of like for like—the *lex talionis*—prevailed (Jud. i. 7; Lev. xxiv. 19, 20). They had foully insulted David, and it is not to be wondered at if he was provoked into making a signal example of them by this severity. In this respect he did not rise above the level of his own age. Modern history has its parallels, not only in the barbarities perpetrated at Alençon by a ruthless soldier like William the Conqueror, but in the merciless massacre by which the Black Prince sullied his fair fame on the capture of Limoges. Green's *History*, pp. 72, 226.

Ch. XIII. 1—22. Amnon's shameful outrage.

This chapter relates how the doom pronounced on David's house began to receive its fulfilment (1) by Amnon's shameful outrage on Tamar, (2) by Absalom's murder of Amnon in revenge for that outrage.

The events here related probably occurred soon after David's marriage with Bath-sheba. See Introd. ch. IV. p. 26.

Dean Stanley points out how "the story, revolting as it is, has the interest of revealing to us the interior of the royal household beyond that of any other incident of those times. (1) The establishments of the princes. (2) The simplicity of the royal employments. (3) The dress of the princesses. (4) The relation of the king to the princesses and to the law." Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, iii. 1433.

1. *Tamar*] Tamar and Absalom were the children of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur (ch. iii. 3). Tamar means *palm-tree*. The Arabs still frequently give their daughters the names of trees dis-

Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was *so* 2
vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a
virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing
to her. But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jo- 3
nadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab
was a very subtil man. And he said unto him, Why *art* 4
thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou
not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar,
my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, 5
Lay *thee* down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and
when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray
thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and
dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at
her hand. So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: 6
and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto
the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make
me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.
Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now *to* thy 7

tinguished for their grace, beauty, or fruitfulness. See Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, II. 501.

Amnon] David's first-born, the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess.

2. *Amnon thought it hard*] **It seemed impossible to Amnon.** Tamar lived a secluded life in the women's apartments, where Amnon could not obtain access to her.

3. *a friend*] This narrative is a strong warning against the danger of evil companions. The clever but unprincipled friend is more likely to provide means for gratifying evil passions than help in resisting them.

Jonadab, the son of Shimeah] *Shimeah* is called *Shammah* in 1 Sam. xvi. 9. He had another son *Jonathan* (ch. xxi. 21).

subtil] The word means simply **wise**, and pronounces no judgment on the way in which Jonadab misused his sagacity. Cp. Job v. 13; Jer. iv. 22.

4. *Why*, &c.] **Why art thou so wasted, O king's son, morning by morning?** His cousin Jonadab either lived in the same house with Amnon as his companion, or noticed his worn looks when he came to visit him at his morning levee.

5. *make thyself sick*] **Feign thyself sick**, and so in *v.* 6.

to see thee] To visit in sickness, as in Ps. xli. 6; 2 Kings viii. 29.

6. *cakes*] The word occurs here only, and may denote some special delicacy suited for an invalid.

7. *home*] **Into the house**: the inner part of the palace, where the women's apartments were.

to thy brother Amnon's house] Cp. *v.* 20. Each of the royal princes evidently had a separate house.

8 brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat. So Tamar
went *to* her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down.
And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his
9 sight, and did bake the cakes. And she took a pan, and
poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And
Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went
10 out every man from him. And Amnon said unto Tamar,
Bring the meat *into* the chamber, that I may eat of thine
hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made,
and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother.
11 And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took
hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.
12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me;
for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou
13 this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?
and *as for* thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.
Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he
14 will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not
hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced
15 her, and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her exceedingly;

8. *flour*] **The dough.**

9. *a pan*] **The pan** in which the cakes or puddings had been cooked.

12. *no such thing ought to be done in Israel*] Israel was a holy nation, sanctified by the peculiar presence of Jehovah among them; and therefore all acts of unchastity were an offence against the true character and calling of the nation. Such acts might be common among heathen nations, but to Israel they were forbidden by the Law, which placed them on a loftier level of morality.

13. *as one of the fools in Israel*] "Fool" denotes not merely one who is stupid and ignorant, but one who has abandoned the fear of God, and cast off the restraints of decency and morality. Cp. ch. iii. 33; Ps. xiv. 1. "Folly" is a term specially applied to unchastity.

he will not withhold me from thee] The marriage of half-brothers and sisters was permitted in patriarchal times, as is shewn by the example of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. xx. 12), but was expressly forbidden by the Mosaic law. Either the law was not strictly observed at this time, or Tamar, hoping to escape immediate violence, suggested that the king had a dispensing power, and might permit a regular marriage.

15. *hated her exceedingly*] "Proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem laeseris." "It is characteristic of human nature to hate one whom you have injured." Tac. *Agric.* c. 42.

so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. 16 And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. 17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. 18 And *she had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. 19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying. 20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate *in* her brother Absalom's

16. There is *no cause*] The Heb. text cannot be so translated, and is certainly corrupt. The Sept. is also confused, but its original reading as indicated by the Old Latin Version gives an excellent sense, thus; "*And she said unto him, Nay, my brother, for greater will be this latter wrong, in sending me away, than the former that thou didst unto me.*"

18. *a garment of divers colours*] The expression is used elsewhere only of Joseph's "coat of many colours" (Gen. xxxvii. 3, 23), and probably means **a long tunic with sleeves**, worn, it would seem, as an outer garment in place of the usual mantle. The fact of her wearing this distinctive dress is mentioned, to shew that the servant and the people who met her in the street would at once recognise who she was.

19. *And Tamar put ashes*, &c.] The ashes and the torn garments (1 Sam. iv. 12; Esth. iv. 1), and the hands clasped above the head (Jer. ii. 37), were all marks of grief and shame.

went on crying] **Went away shrieking as she went**; not lamenting with silent tears, but with loud passionate shrieks and wailing.

20. *Amnon*] The Heb. form here, and here only, is *Aminon*, which has been explained as a diminutive intended to express contempt, but may possibly be only an accidental variation.

hold now thy peace] Absalom urged her to bear the outrage patiently, and avoid a public scandal; feeling sure that David would not be persuaded to inflict an adequate punishment on Amnon, and intending to watch his own opportunity for revenge. To him, according to Oriental custom, belonged the duty of avenging his sister's wrongs. Cp. Gen. xxxiv. 27.

desolate] Ruined and deserted. Cp. Is. liv. 1, where "the desolate" is contrasted with the married wife.

21 house. But when king David heard of all these things, he
22 was very wroth. And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23—29. *Absalom's vengeance.*

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim:
24 and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants
25 go with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed
26 him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my

21. *was very wroth*] The Sept. and the ordinary text of the Vulgate add, "and he vexed not the spirit of Amnon his son, because he loved him, because he was his firstborn," i.e. in spite of his anger he did not punish or even rebuke the offence, though the legal penalty of his crime was death. David's indulgent treatment of his sons was a fruitful source of mischief (cp. 1 Kings i. 6), and led in this case to the murder of Amnon, and ultimately to Absalom's rebellion. The consciousness of his own guilt moreover weakened his hands for dealing with Amnon's offence.

22. *neither good nor bad*] He made no allusion whatever to the matter, in order to quiet Amnon's suspicions. For the phrase cp. Gen. xxiv. 50; xxxi. 24.

23—29. Absalom's vengeance.

23. *Absalom had sheepshearers*] Sheepshearing was and still is an occasion of festivity. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 7 ff.

Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim] Possibly *Tell Asur*, five miles north-east of Bethel, and two miles north-west of *et-Taiyibeh*, which is supposed to represent Ephraim. The preposition *beside* or *near* implies that *Ephraim* is here the name of a town not of the tribe territory. Cp. John xi. 54.

24. *let the king*, &c.] A clever plan for removing all suspicion from Amnon's mind.

25. *lest we be chargeable unto thee*] **Lest we be burdensome unto thee.** *Chargeable* is derived from *charge*, in the now obsolete sense of 'a load' or 'burden,' cp. 1 Thess. ii. 9. It is "the first instance history offers of the ruinous cost of royal visits to those who are honoured with them." Kitto's *Bible Illustr.* p. 403.

blessed him] i.e. dismissed him with a farewell blessing. Cp. ch. xix. 39.

brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee? But Absalom pressed him, 27
that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.
Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark 28
ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.
And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom 29
had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

30—39. *The news brought to David. Absalom's flight.*

And it came to pass, while they *were* in the way, that 30
tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. Then the 31
king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood *by* with their clothes rent. And Jon- 32
adab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said,

26. *let my brother Amnon go*] If David would not go himself, at least he might send his eldest son as his representative. David's reluctance to consent shews that he felt some misgivings that Absalom had not forgiven Amnon.

27. At the end of this verse, the Sept. adds, "And Absalom made a feast like the feast of a king." The words may easily have dropped out of the Hebrew text owing to the similar endings of the sentences.

28. *Now Absalom had commanded*] **And Absalom commanded.** Absalom felt himself bound in honour to avenge his sister's wrong, and moreover welcomed the pretext for getting rid of Amnon, who stood between himself and the succession to the throne.

29. *did unto Amnon*, &c.] Though the princes were attended by a numerous retinue (*v.* 34), the blow was struck so suddenly and unexpectedly, that no resistance was possible, and Absalom escaped without difficulty.

upon his mule] Mules were generally used for riding at this time by persons of distinction, as Absalom (ch. xviii. 9), David, and Solomon (1 Kings i. 33, 38).

30—39. THE NEWS BROUGHT TO DAVID. ABSALOM'S FLIGHT.

31. *tare his garments*] **Rent his clothes.** The E.V. has introduced a distinction which does not exist in the Hebrew. Cp. ch. i. 11.

lay on the earth] Cp. ch. xii. 16.

and all his servants, &c.] The Sept. and Vulg. represent a slightly different reading; "And all his servants, who stood by him, rent their clothes."

Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom *this* hath been determined from the
33 day that he forced his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think *that* all
34 the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold, there came much people
35 by the way of the hill side behind him. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant
36 said, so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that behold, the king's sons came, and lift up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his
37 servants wept very sore. But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David*

32. *Let not my lord suppose*, &c.] A practical illustration of the sagacity for which Jonadab was famous (*v.* 3). He at once rejects the exaggerations of rumour, and predicts accurately what had really happened.

by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined] Lit., *upon Absalom's mouth hath it been set;* that is, Absalom's sinister looks have all along betrayed his determination to kill Amnon; or, his purpose has been obvious from his words; but the latter explanation is less likely, as Absalom seems to have dissembled his revenge in order to disarm Amnon's suspicion.

34. *But Absalom fled*] This brief statement of Absalom's escape is inserted here in anticipation of *vv.* 37, 38, in order to contrast Absalom's flight with the return of the king's sons to Jerusalem.

the young man that kept the watch] At Jerusalem, probably in the tower over one of the gates. Cp. ch. xviii. 24.

much people] The princes had been attended by a numerous retinue of followers.

by the way of the hill side behind him] **From the way behind him from the side of the hill**: that is probably, if the text is sound, *from the west*. But the Sept. has important variations, thus: "And behold much people were coming in the way behind him by the side of the hill at the descent. And the watchman came and told the king, and said, I have seen men coming from the way of Oronen, by the side of the hill. And Jonadab said," &c. *Oronen* may represent *Horonaim* or Beth-horon, the dual form referring to the two places of that name, the "Upper" and "Lower" Beth-horon—which lay north-west of Jerusalem.

37. *But Absalom fled*, &c.] **Now Absalom had fled and gone to Talmai.** The narrative goes back to *v.* 34. Talmai was Absalom's grandfather. See note on ch. iii. 3.

And David *mourned*] *David* has fallen out of the Heb. text, but is found in the Sept. and Vulg., and is clearly necessary to the sense.

mourned for his son every day. So Absalom fled, and went 38
to Geshur, and was there three years. And *the soul of* king 39
David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

CH. XIV. 1—20. *Joab's stratagem to procure Absalom's recall.*

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's 14

for his son] Amnon, not Absalom, is meant. His first feeling towards Absalom was one of anger.

38. "If the text of these verses is sound, they afford a curious specimen of Hebrew narrative. In *v.* 34 we read *Absalom fled;* in *v.* 37, *Absalom fled and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur;* in *v.* 38, *Absalom fled and went to Geshur and was there three years.* At each step of the narrative only the fact is brought out which is wanted, (1) the flight; (2) the place whither he fled; (3) the duration of the absence; but with each new fact the old ones on which it depends are repeated." *Speaker's Comm.*

39. *And* the soul of *king David*, &c.] The Heb. of this verse is obscure, and has been made to bear almost opposite meanings. (1) The E.V., following the Jewish commentators, supplies *the soul* as the subject of the verb, which is feminine. It describes David as pining for the return of Absalom, after his sorrow for Amnon's death had abated. To this interpretation it may be objected, (*a*) that the verb, in the voice used here, does not mean *longed:* (*b*) that if David had been anxious for Absalom's return, he might have recalled him at once, whereas even when by Joab's instrumentality he had been brought back to Jerusalem, he was not admitted to the royal presence. (2) By taking the verb impersonally we may obtain the sense, *David desisted from going forth against Absalom* (so the Vulg. "cessavitque rex David persequi Absalom;" and probably the Sept.), i. e. he gave up plans of pursuit and revenge; or by emending the text according to a very probable conjecture, *the king's wrath ceased to go forth against Absalom.* Either of these renderings gives the general sense which seems to be required by the context, that David's active hostility towards Absalom was mitigated by the lapse of time.

CH. XIV. 1—20. JOAB'S STRATAGEM TO PROCURE ABSALOM'S RECALL.

1. *that the king's heart was toward Absalom*] This verse like the preceding one admits of two widely different explanations. (1) If the rendering of the E.V. is retained, the exact meaning will depend on whether the first or the second explanation of chap. xiii. 39 given above, is adopted. (*a*) In combination with the first of those explanations, the words simply state Joab's recognition of the king's yearning towards his son which is there described. (*b*) In combination with the second

2 heart *was* toward Absalom. And Joab sent to Tekoah, and

of those explanations, which seems to be preferable, the words describe a further change in the king's feeling from indifference to a positive desire for reconciliation. But on the supposition that David was longing to be reconciled to Absalom it is by no means easy to explain the following narrative. Why was Joab's subtle scheme necessary, if David was eager of his own accord to recall Absalom? Why, if he was longing for a reconciliation, did he refuse to admit him to his presence for two whole years after his return?

(2) The words may however be rendered: "**And** Joab the son of Zeruiah **knew** that the king's heart was **against** Absalom." In favour of this rendering it may be urged (*a*) that the preposition generally means *against* not *toward:* (*b*) that in the only other passage where the phrase occurs (Dan. xi. 28), it unquestionably expresses hostility: (*c*) that this meaning agrees better with the whole course of the narrative, which leaves the impression that Absalom's recall was a concession extorted from David by Joab's cunning. Although David had abandoned the ideas of vengeance which he at first entertained (of course the second explanation of ch. xiii. 39 is the only one which can stand in combination with this rendering) his heart remained set against Absalom, and he shewed no disposition to recall him from exile. This view of the state of David's feelings towards Absalom at once accounts for Joab's subtle scheme to convince the king of the hardship of prolonging Absalom's exile, and for the king's refusal to see Absalom when he had been persuaded to allow him to return. It may seem inconsistent with the passionate affection which he afterwards displayed for his rebellious son (ch. xviii. 5, 33), but it is not really so. A violent revulsion of feeling, when Absalom's life was in danger, and still more when he had perished by a miserable death, would be quite in accordance with David's impulsive character.

Most commentators however adopt the rendering of the E.V., and suppose that political and judicial reasons prevented David from yielding to the dictates of affection: that, perceiving this, Joab planned his scheme in order to give the king the excuse he desired for recalling his son: that the refusal to see Absalom was prompted by a hope that the "discipline of disapproval" might bring him to a state of penitence for his offence.

2. *Tekoah*] Situated on a lofty hill five miles south of Bethlehem. The name survives almost unaltered in the modern *Tekûa*. It was the native place of Ira, one of David's Thirty Heroes (ch. xxiii. 26): Rehoboam fortified it as a defence against invasions from the south (2 Chr. xi. 6): but its chief claim to be remembered is as the home of the prophet Amos who was "among the herdmen of Tekoa" (Am. i. 1). The proximity of Tekoah to Bethlehem explains Joab's acquaintance with this woman, whose shrewdness fitted her to act the part he wished. The term "wise woman" does not mean a witch, as the Speaker's Comm. implies when it speaks of her "lawless profession." Cp. ch. xx. 16.

fetcht thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not *thyself* with oil, but be as a woman *that had* a long time mourned for the dead: and come to 3
the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. And when the woman of Tekoah 4
spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. And the king said 5
unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. And 6
thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. And behold, the whole 7
family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and *so* they shall quench my coal which is

feign thyself to be a mourner] Compare the similar 'acted parable' in 1 Kings xx. 35—43.

anoint not thyself] Cp. ch. xii. 20, note.

3. *come to the king*] An interesting evidence of the simplicity of the times, when the king was thus directly accessible to his subjects who had causes to be tried or grievances to be redressed. Cp. ch. xv. 2; 1 Kings iii. 16.

4. *And when the woman...spake...she fell*] All the versions and many Hebrew MSS read as the sense requires: "And the woman of Tekoah came to the king, and fell," &c.

fell on her face to the ground] It was and in some cases still is the practice in Oriental countries for a subject approaching the king, especially with any petition, to kneel down and bend forward until the forehead actually touches the ground. See the illustrations from Assyrian and Egyptian monuments in Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, II. 649.

did obeisance] See note on ch. i. 2, and cp. the almost identical phrase in 1 Sam. xxv. 23.

Help] Or, Save. Cp. 2 Kings vi. 26; Ps. xx. 9. The Sept. repeats it twice: "Help, O king, help."

7. *the whole family*, &c.] The whole clan demanded blood-revenge, according to the primitive custom, sanctioned and regulated by the Mosaic Law. See Num. xxxv. 19; Deut. xix. 12, 13.

and we will destroy the heir also] The woman puts these words **that we may kill him...and destroy the heir also** into the mouth of her kinsmen, in order to make their conduct appear in the worst possible light, as actuated not so much by a wish to observe the law as by covetousness

left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor re-
8 mainder upon the earth. And the king said unto the
woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning
9 thee. And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My
lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's
10 house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless. And
the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him
11 to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. Then
said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD
thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of
blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And
he said, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of
12 thy son fall to the earth. Then the woman said, Let thine
handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the
13 king. And he said, Say on. And the woman said, Where-
fore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people
of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is
faulty, in that the king doth not fetch *home* again his ban-

and a desire to share the inheritance among themselves. Cp. Matt. xxi. 38.

they shall quench my coal which is left] The surviving son, who is the last hope for the continuance of his family, is compared to the live coal still left among the embers, by which the fire almost extinct may be rekindled.

8. *I will give charge*, &c.] Implying that her son should be protected. The king could reasonably grant a free pardon, as it was a case of manslaughter and not a premeditated murder.

9. *the iniquity be on me*, &c.] If there is any guilt in thus leaving bloodshed unavenged, may I and my family bear the punishment. She wishes to lead the king up to a more definite promise, before she applies her parable to the case of Absalom.

11. *let the king remember the* LORD *thy God*] She presses for the further assurance of an oath in the name of God.

there shall not one hair, &c.] Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34.

12. *Let thine handmaid*, &c.] The great object of her errand has still to be effected. Firmly and clearly, but yet to all appearance incidentally, she argues from the case of her son to that of Absalom.

13. *Wherefore then*, &c.] David's resolution to keep Absalom in exile was an injury to the people of God, for he was the heir to the throne.

for the king, &c.] Better, **and by the king's speaking this word he is as one guilty.** The promise of protection to her son was a condemnation of his own conduct towards Absalom. He had acknowledged the possibility of an exception to the general rule of punishment for

ished. For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the 14
ground, which cannot be gathered up *again;* neither doth
God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that *his*
banished be not expelled from him. Now therefore that 15
I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king,
it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy
handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be
that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. For 16
the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand
of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together
out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid said, 17
The word of my Lord the king shall now be comfortable:
for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern
good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with

murder, but he had not extended this exception to his own son, in spite of the strongest reasons for so doing.

14. *For we must needs die*] The argument of this verse seems to be, that since life is uncertain and cannot be restored, and since God Himself sets the example of mercy, David should be reconciled to his son at once, before it is too late. For the simile of water spilt, cp. Ps. lviii. 7.

neither doth God respect any *person*] This translation cannot be defended. Better: **and God doth not take away life, but deviseth devices** (lit. *thinketh thoughts*, cp. *v.* 13) **to the end that he may not** [utterly] **banish a banished one.** The statement is quite general, but contains a pointed allusion to God's mercy in sparing David's own life when he had deserved death for adultery and murder, and devising a plan to bring him to repentance and so restore him to His presence.

15. *Now therefore*, &c.] Simply, **And now.** There seems to be a studied ambiguity about this verse. If "the people" means the family who had demanded the surrender of her son, she is artfully returning to her own petition, to prevent the king from suspecting that her whole story is a fiction: if, as is more natural, "the people" means the nation, she is excusing her boldness on the ground that she was forced by them into speaking thus.

16. *the inheritance of God*] The nation of Israel. Cp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; Deut. xxxii. 9.

17. *Then thine handmaid said*] Sept. "And the woman said:" which suits the context better.

shall now be comfortable] Lit. **Let the word...be for rest:** give me security from my enemies.

as an angel of God] Cp. *v.* 20; ch. xix. 27; and 1 Sam. xxix. 9.

to discern good and bad] **To hear the good and the evil:** to listen patiently to all manner of petitions, and decide justly upon them.

therefore the LORD *thy God will be with thee*] The words are a prayer or blessing: **and Jehovah thy God be with thee.**

18 thee. Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now
19 speak. And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all
20 these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: to fetch about *this* form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

21—24. *Joab sent to bring Absalom back.*

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.
22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.
23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom
24 *to* Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

19. *none can turn*, &c.] The king's words hit the mark precisely: he discerns the exact state of the case.

20. *to fetch about* this *form of speech*] Rather, **in order to bring round the face of the business**: that is, to alter the aspect of Absalom's relations to his father.

21—24. JOAB SENT TO BRING ABSALOM BACK.

21. *I have done this thing*] I have granted thy wish and restored Absalom to favour. The "read" text or *Qrî* has *thou hast done*, but the "written" text or *Kthîbh* (supported by the Sept. and Vulg.) is certainly right here.

22. *his servant*] This is the reading of the *Kthîbh*, and is clearly best: the marginal alternative *thy* comes from the *Qrî*.

24. *let him not see my face*] To recall Absalom without giving him a full pardon was a most dangerous policy. It could not fail to irritate him. It may be inferred from *vv.* 29 and 31 that he was confined to his house by David's order, for otherwise he would not have had to wait until Joab came. David's reasons for this course of action are discussed in the note on *v.* 1.

25—27. *Absalom's person and family.*

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as 25
Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to
the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And 26
when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that
he polled *it:* because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore
he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head *at* two hun-
dred shekels after the king's weight. And unto Absalom 27
there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name
was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28—33. *Absalom readmitted to David's presence through Joab's mediation.*

So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not 28
the king's face. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have 29
sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and

25—27. ABSALOM'S PERSON AND FAMILY.

26. *polled*] From *poll*, the head, comes the verb *to poll*, to cut the hair.

two hundred shekels after the king's weight] If the royal shekel was the same as the sacred shekel, two hundred shekels would be about six pounds, an extraordinary weight. But perhaps the royal shekel was smaller, or as is so often the case with numbers, there may be some error in the text. It was not considered effeminate for men to wear their hair long: the Nazarites did so (Num. vi. 5), and Josephus says that Solomon's body-guard had long flowing hair. Modern Arabs frequently allow the hair to grow to its natural length.

27. *three sons*] Who are not named, because none of them lived to grow up. See ch. xviii. 18.

Tamar] Who inherited the beauty as well as the name of her aunt. The Sept. adds, "and she became the wife of Roboam the son of Solomon, and bare him Abia." This however does not agree with the books of Kings and Chronicles. From 1 Kings xv. 2 we learn that Maachah the daughter of Abishalom was the wife of Rehoboam and mother of Abijam: from 2 Chr. xiii. 2 that Abijah's mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (cp. 2 Chr. xi. 20—22). The natural inference is that *Michaiah* is an alternative name or a textual error for *Maachah*, and that Maachah was the daughter of Uriel and Tamar, and granddaughter of Absalom, named after her great-grandmother.

28—33. ABSALOM READMITTED TO DAVID'S PRESENCE THROUGH JOAB'S MEDIATION.

29. *he would not come to him*] Not choosing to incur David's displeasure by visiting Absalom while he was still in disgrace.

when he sent again the second time, he would not come.
30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near
mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And
31 Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose,
and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him,
32 Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? And
Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying,
Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say,
Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been* good for me
to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's
face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.
33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had
called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself
on his face to the ground before the king: and the king
kissed Absalom.

Chs. XV.—XIX. *Absalom's Rebellion.*

Ch. XV. 1—6. *Absalom ingratiates himself with the people.*

15 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared

30. *set it on fire*] Partly in revenge for Joab's refusal (cp. Jud. xv. 3—5), partly in the hope of bringing Joab to make a complaint in person.

The Sept. and some MSS. of the Vulg. add at the end of the verse: "And Joab's servants came to him with their clothes rent, and said, Absalom's servants have set thy field on fire." The words are not absolutely necessary to the sense, but they may have been accidentally omitted from the Heb. text.

32. *if there be any iniquity in me*] Let the king treat me either as guilty or as innocent. This half-forgiveness is worse than death. Absalom means to protest that he is innocent, and had been fully justified in taking revenge on Amnon, as the king had left his offence unpunished.

33. *the king kissed Absalom*] As a pledge of reconciliation. See Gen. xxxiii. 4; xlv. 15; Luke xv. 20.

Chs. XV.—XIX. Absalom's Rebellion.

For the Psalms illustrative of this period see Introd. ch. VIII. § 6, p. 48.

Ch. XV. 1—6. Absalom ingratiates himself with the people.

1. *And it came to pass after this*] To recall Absalom without granting him a full pardon was ill-judged: to readmit him to favour, after he had been irritated by two years of exclusion, without the

him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.
And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of 2
the gate: and it was *so*, *that when* any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom 3
said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee. Absalom 4
said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath *any* suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice. And it was *so*, that when 5
any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this man- 6

slightest sign of repentance on his part, was fatal. The natural consequences of such treatment are recorded in the following chapters[1].

chariots and horses, &c.] **A chariot and horses.** Absalom imitated the magnificence of foreign monarchs, in order to make an impression on the people. Cp. Adonijah's practice (1 Kings i. 5), and see 1 Sam. viii. 11.

2. *beside the way of the gate*] By the side of the road leading to the gate of the king's palace, where he sat to transact business. Cp. ch. xix. 8. From this practice the Sultan's government is still popularly called in Turkey "the Sultan's gate," and the Sublime Porte, which is the French equivalent of *Bab-i-Humayoon* (the high gate), the name of the principal gate of the palace at Constantinople, is used by us as a synonym for the Turkish government.

a controversy] Better, **a suit**, as in *v.* 4.

of one of the tribes of Israel] Belongs to such and such a tribe or city: naming the particular one in each case.

3. *See, thy matters*, &c.] He artfully flatters each suitor by pronouncing a favourable decision on his case, condoles with him on the improbability of his obtaining a hearing, and hints how differently matters would be managed if he were in power.

there is no man, &c.] This and not the marginal alternative *none will hear thee from the king downward* is the correct rendering. There was no one appointed to investigate the evidence and lay it before the king. He implies that decisions were given hastily and arbitrarily, and that his father needed assessors to help him. There is no reason to suppose that David was neglecting his duty as a judge; but the task was growing too heavy for one man to perform it. See Ewald's *Hist.* iii. 176.

5. *put forth his hand*] Instead of allowing the people to do him

[1] Dryden has made use of the events of this period as the basis of his political poem on the court of Charles II., entitled "Absalom and Achithophel," in which Absalom represents the Duke of Monmouth, and Achithophel his evil adviser Shaftesbury.

ner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7—12. *Absalom's conspiracy.*

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow,
8 which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed *to* Jerusa-
9 lem, then I will serve the LORD. And the king said unto
10 him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall

homage as the king's son, he took them by the hand, and saluted them familiarly with a kiss. Cp. ch. xx. 9.

Compare the description of Bolingbroke's behaviour which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Richard II.:

> Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green
> Observed his courtship to the common people;
> How he did seem to dive into their hearts
> With humble and familiar courtesy,
> What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
> Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles.
> *King Richard II.*, Act i. Sc. 4. 23.

6. *stole the hearts*] Robbed his father of the people's affection and transferred it to himself. Sept. ἰδιοποιεῖτο = made his own.

7—12. ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY.

7. *after forty years*] There is no obvious date from which forty years could be reckoned in this way without specifying what point of time was intended. In place of *forty* we must read **four** with Josephus and some of the ancient versions. The four years are to be reckoned in all probability from the time of Absalom's reconciliation to David. They were spent in preparing for the conspiracy by ingratiating himself with the people in the way described in the preceding verses.

in Hebron] The fact that Hebron was his birth-place would make the wish to pay his vow there instead of at Jerusalem seem sufficiently natural.

8. *then I will serve the* LORD] By offering a sacrifice in accordance with his vow. Cp. Jacob's similar vow (Gen. xxviii. 20—22).

10. *spies*] Absalom's emissaries are called *spies*, because they were sent secretly to ascertain public feeling, and only divulge their real purpose where they could count on support.

the sound of the trumpet] The signal for revolt and for the gathering of his supporters, like the hoisting of a standard in modern times. He

say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. And with Absalom 11
went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called;
and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any
thing. And Absalom sent *for* Ahithophel the Gilonite, 12
David's counseller, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he
offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the
people increased continually with Absalom.

13—18. *The king's flight from Jerusalem.*

And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts 13

was to be proclaimed king simultaneously all over the country. Cp. ch. xx. 1; 1 Kings i. 34; 2 Kings ix. 13.

in Hebron] The choice of Hebron clearly shews that Absalom expected to find his chief support in the tribe of Judah. It is probable that the old tribal jealousies had been revived, and that Judah resented its absorption into the nation at large. Such a spirit of discontent would account for the slackness of Judah to bring back the king when the rebellion was over (ch. xix. 11). Hebron itself too probably contained many persons who were aggrieved by the removal of the court to Jerusalem. See Ewald's *Hist. of Israel*, III. 176.

11. *two hundred men...that were called*] Invited to the sacrificial feast as Absalom's guests. In all probability they were men of distinction, and would naturally be regarded, both at Jerusalem and at Hebron, as accomplices in the conspiracy. No doubt Absalom hoped that many of them, finding themselves thus compromised, and seeing the number of his supporters, would decide to join him; or failing this, they might be held as hostages.

12. *Gilonite*] Formed from *Giloh*, as *Shilonite* (1 Kings xi. 29) from *Shiloh*. Giloh was one of a group of cities in the mountains of Judah, to the south or south-west of Hebron (Josh. xv. 51).

sent for *Ahithophel*] The sense is no doubt right, but it cannot be got out of the existing text. Probably some word has dropped out; the original reading may have been *sent and called Ahithophel*.

Ahithophel has justly been regarded as a type of the arch-traitor Judas. Even if the words "mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. xli. 9, quoted in John xiii. 18), were not written of Ahithophel, the parallel between his treachery and suicide, and the treachery and suicide of Judas, is too striking to be neglected.

while he offered sacrifices] While he offered the sacrifices. In order to give time for his adherents to gather, Absalom celebrated the sacrifice, which was the ostensible object of his journey. To Ahithophel, who no doubt had already been sounded, he sent a special invitation to join him.

13—18. THE KING'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM.

For the Psalms written during the Flight see Introd. ch. VIII. § 6, p. 48.

14 of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said
unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise,
and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom:
make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and
bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of
15 the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king,
Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord
16 the king shall appoint. And the king went forth, and all his
household after him. And the king left ten women, *which*
17 *were* concubines, to keep the house. And the king went
forth, and all the people after him, and tarried *in* a place
18 that *was* far off. And all his servants passed on beside him;
and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all
the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from
Gath, passed on before the king.

13. *The hearts*, &c.] Cp. *v.* 6; Jud. ix. 3.

14. *let us flee*] For the moment David's courage seems to have failed him. The calamities predicted by Nathan (ch. xii. 11), stared him in the face: a sack of Jerusalem with all the horrors of civil war seemed imminent: he could not face them, and retreat proved in the end to be the wisest course. Time was gained; the first violence of rebellion spent itself; his loyal subjects recovered from their alarm and rallied to defend him. Ahithophel was perfectly right in discerning that delay would be fatal to the enterprise (ch. xvii. 1, 2).

16. *And the king went forth*] "It was apparently early on the morning of the day after he had received the news of the rebellion that the king left the city of Jerusalem. There is no single day in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as that which describes this memorable flight. There is none, we may add, that combines so many of David's characteristics—his patience, his high-spirited religion, his generosity, his calculation: we miss only his daring courage. Was it crushed, for the moment, by the weight of parental grief, or of bitter remorse?" Stanley's *Lect.* II. 97. Who, we may ask, was the eye-witness who has preserved the picture of the scene with such minute and life-like detail? May it not have been the prophet Nathan?

17. *tarried in a place that was far off*] Better, **halted at the Far House**: the last house on the outskirts of the city, before the road crossed the Kidron. It seems to be used almost as a proper name—*Beth-merchak*—for the locality. Here David halted, while his troops passed in review before him, and crossed the Kidron.

18. *all the Gittites*] If the text is sound, we must infer that David had brought with him a body of Philistine followers from Gath, a supposition which is in accordance with the view that the Cherethites and Pelethites were Philistines. See note on ch. viii. 18. But it is possible that we should follow the LXX. in reading *Gibbôrîm* in place of

19—23. *The fidelity of Ittai.*

Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest 19
thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the
king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile. *Whereas* 20

Gittites. During his wanderings David formed a corps of six hundred picked men, who were particularly distinguished as "David's men." They appear first at Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 13, cp. xxii. 2), were with him in the wilderness of Paran (xxv. 13), followed him to Gath (xxvii. 2, 3) and Ziklag (xxvii. 8, xxix. 1, xxx. 1, 9), came up with him to Hebron (2 Sam. ii. 3), and finally to Jerusalem (v. 6). This corps seems to have been afterwards maintained as a guard with the title of "the Gibbôrîm," that is, "the Heroes" or "the Mighty Men" (cp. ch. x. 7, xvi. 6, xx. 7; 1 Kings i. 8), and it is natural to identify the six hundred here mentioned with that body. Some critics think that without altering the reading, we should identify the Gittites with the Gibbôrîm, and suppose that they were called Gittites either because they had followed David ever since his residence in Gath; or because the corps had at this time been largely recruited from the natives of Gath.

The Sept. text of *v.* 18 is as follows: "And all his servants passed on beside him, and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites, and halted at the olive tree in the wilderness. And all the people marched by close to him, and all his attendants, and all the mighty men, and all the warriors, six hundred men, and were present by his side; and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, the six hundred men who came after him from Gath, marched on before the king." This appears to be the rendering of a text differing somewhat from the present Hebrew, to which has been added a rendering of the present Hebrew text, with some further glosses or alternative renderings. "The olive tree in the wilderness," which marked the scene of the second halt, (if the reading is genuine and not a mere mistranslation), was probably beyond the Mount of Olives on the road to the Jordan.

19—23. The fidelity of Ittai.

19. *Ittai the Gittite*] A distinguished Philistine who had quite recently (*v.* 20) migrated from his home with his family and followers (*v.* 22) to enter David's service. From the fact that he shared the command of the army with Joab and Abishai (ch. xviii. 2) it is clear that he must have been an experienced general.

return to thy place] His new home in Jerusalem. This is the right rendering of the Hebrew text as it stands: but the order of the words is unusual, and both Sept. and Vulg. support a different reading: *Return and dwell with the king; for thou art a stranger and also an exile from thy place.*

with the king] David's meaning is that Ittai need not involve himself in the revolutions of a foreign country, but might take service under Absalom or any other reigning king without breach of faith.

thou camest *but* yesterday, should I *this* day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with
21 thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even
22 there *also* will thy servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.
23 And all the country wept *with* a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also *himself* passed over the

an exile] We can only conjecture that Ittai had been compelled to leave his country in consequence of some revolution. If we may suppose this to have been the case, it gives additional delicacy to David's thoughtfulness in wishing to spare him the repetition of hardships he had but lately experienced.

20. *I go whither I may*] Not knowing where he might find a home, as in the old days of his flight from Saul. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.

take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be *with thee*] The Hebrew as it stands must be rendered: *take back thy brethren with thee in mercy and truth:* but the true text is probably preserved by the Sept. and Vulg. *Take back thy brethren with thee: and the Lord shew thee* [or, *shall shew thee*] *mercy and truth:* to which some texts of the Vulg. add: *because thou hast shewn kindness and faithfulness.* Cp. ch. ii. 5, 6.

21. *Ittai answered*] Compare Ruth's answer to her mother-in-law (Ruth i. 16, 17).

23. *all the country*] Lit. *all the land:* the inhabitants who stood by to watch the procession, as distinguished from *all the people*, the army and retinue of followers accompanying David.

the brook Kidron] **The ravine of Kidron** is the deep ravine on the east of Jerusalem, now commonly known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which separates the city from the Mount of Olives. No stream now flows in it except during the heavy rains of winter, nor is there any evidence that there was anciently more water in it than at present. The name, if it is a Hebrew word, means *black*, referring either to the blackness of the torrent flowing through it (Job vi. 16), or more probably to the gloominess of the ravine. The Sept., following the common tendency to substitute a significant name of similar sound, calls it *the ravine of the cedars* (χειμάρρους τῶν κέδρων—Cedrôn, cp. John xviii. 1). In the O. T. it is chiefly mentioned as an unhallowed spot used for a common cemetery, into which idolatrous abominations were thrown by reforming kings (1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Chr. xxix. 16, xxx. 14; 2 Kings xxiii. 4, 6, 12; Jer. xxxi. 40). The single mention of it in the N. T. is perhaps designed to recall the present occasion and to suggest the parallel between David fleeing from Jerusalem, and Christ leaving the city which had rejected Him, as the treachery of

brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24—29. *The Ark sent back to Jerusalem.*

And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bear- 24
ing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said unto 25
Zadok, Carry back the ark of God *into* the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me *both* it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, 26
I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. The king said also unto 27
Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou a seer? return *into* the city

Judas was the counterpart and "fulfilment" of that of Ahithophel (John xviii. 1, xiii. 18).

toward the way of the wilderness] The road to Jericho led through the northern part of the desert of Judah. Cp. *v.* 28 and ch. xvi. 2.

24—29. THE ARK SENT BACK TO JERUSALEM.

24. *and Abiathar went up*] The Ark halted, to allow the people who were still coming out of the city time to overtake the procession. Meanwhile Abiathar went on up the Mount of Olives, for some purpose which is not stated, possibly to watch the stream of people coming out of the city. He then returned to carry the Ark back. It seems best to suppose that the narrative goes back here, and that the Ark was not taken across the Kidron. Certainly it does not seem to have been carried up the Mount of Olives.

25. *his habitation*] Jerusalem, and in particular the tent where the Ark was kept, was "the habitation" (Ex. xv. 13), the earthly "dwelling-place," of Jehovah (1 Kings viii. 13), so far as that could be said of any special locality (1 Kings viii. 27). For the thought cp. Ps. xliii. 3.

26. *I have no delight in thee*] For as he had sung in the confident faith of happier days, deliverance from his enemies depended on God's good pleasure. See ch. xxii. 20, and cp. 1 Kings x. 9.

behold here am *I*, &c.] Words of true resignation and humble submission to the will of God. He felt that he deserved this punishment for his sins.

27. Art not *thou a seer*] An obscure expression variously explained. (1) *Art thou a seer?* The high-priest is supposed to be called a *seer*, because he received divine revelations by means of the Urim and Thummim; but there is no trace of such a use of the term elsewhere. (2) *Dost thou see?* i.e. understand: an untenable rendering. (3) The Vulg. gives different vowels to the consonants, and renders, *O seer, return*, &c. (4) The Sept. reads, *See! thou shalt return*, which re-

in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son,
28 and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry in the
plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to
29 certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark
of God again *to* Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30—37. *Hushai commissioned to defeat Ahithophel.*

30 And David went up by the ascent of *mount* Olivet, and
wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went
barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered
every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they
31 went up. And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among
the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD,

quires but a small change in the Heb. text, and is probably the best solution of the difficulty.

28. *in the plain of the wilderness*] The level district of the Jordan valley near Jericho, called elsewhere "the plains of Jericho." Cp. Josh. v. 10; 2 Kings xxv. 5; and note on ch. ii. 29. Instead however of *plains* which is the traditional reading (Qrî), the written text (Kthîbh) has *fords*. This certainly seems the more probable reading both here and in ch. xvii. 16, where there is the same variation, for a definite place must have been named at which the messenger was to find David, and the ford, as a critical point, would be a most natural halting place.

to certify me] To tell me how matters are going in the city.

30—37. HUSHAI COMMISSIONED TO DEFEAT AHITHOPHEL.

30. *the ascent of* mount *Olivet*] Lit. by the ascent of Olives: the name *mount Olivet* is derived from *mons oliveti* in the Vulgate of Acts i. 12. The "mount of Olives" is the ridge which rises on the east of Jerusalem above the Kidron ravine, screening the city from the desert country beyond. With the exception of this touching scene, there is little of interest connected with the Mount of Olives in the O. T. On it, perhaps on the spot already consecrated for worship (*v.* 32), Solomon erected high places for the false gods of his foreign wives (1 Kings xi. 7, 8), which were desecrated long afterwards by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 13, 14). A passing allusion to the woods which covered it (Neh. viii. 15), and the details of the scenery in two prophetic visions (Ezek. xi. 23; Zech. xiv. 4), complete the references to it in the O. T. "Its lasting glory belongs not to the Old Dispensation but to the New." See Stanley's *Sinai and Pal.* p. 185 ff.

had his head covered, and he went barefoot] The muffled head marks the deep grief which shuts itself up from the outer world: the bare feet —still a sign of mourning in the East—betoken affliction, self-humiliation, penitence. Cp ch. xix. 4; Esth. vi. 12; Ezek. xxiv. 17.

I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.
And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top 32
of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the
Archite *came* to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon
his head: unto whom David said, If thou passest on with 33
me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: but if thou 34
return *to* the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy

32. *the top* of the mount] *The head* or *top* is used here and in ch. xvi. 1 almost as a proper name, and would naturally refer to the highest summit, where the high place would most probably be. David seems to have taken the road leading directly over the hill to Bahurim (see note on ch. iii. 16) instead of the southern road to Jericho.

where he worshipped God] **Where he was wont to worship God**: or, **where God was wont to be worshipped.** The tense indicates that an habitual practice is meant. It was no doubt one of the high places, which seem to have been recognised as legitimate sanctuaries until the Temple was built. Cp. 1 Sam. vii. 17, ix. 13 *note;* 1 Kings iii. 2—4.

Hushai the Archite] "The border of the Archite" (E. V. wrongly *Archi*) is mentioned as one of the boundary marks between Ephraim and Benjamin (Josh. xvi. 2). A trace of the name is perhaps preserved in *Ain Arîk*, about six miles W. S. W. of Bethel. As Hushai came *to meet* David he had probably been absent from the city—perhaps at his native place—when the rebellion broke out, and hastened back to join his master. His coming was in a manner the answer to David's prayer in *v.* 31.

with his coat rent, &c.] See note on ch. i. 2. The term rendered *coat* denotes the loose shirt or tunic, over which a cloak was usually worn. See the illustrations in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, I. 454, or Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, I. 36.

33. *unto whom David said*] **And David said unto him.**

a burden unto me] Perhaps Hushai was old and somewhat infirm. Cp. ch. xix. 35.

34. *and say unto Absalom*] "Hushai's conduct is certainly no model of Christian uprightness. It is therefore curiously instructive to see it made the warrant of a similarly questionable act in modern times. Sir Samuel Morland, Secretary of State to Cromwell, in describing his betrayal of his master to Charles II., says, 'I called to remembrance Hushai's behaviour towards Absalom, which I found not at all blamed in Holy Writ, and yet his was a larger step than mine.'" Stanley's *Lect.* II. 99. Stratagems of this kind, involving deliberate falsehood and treachery, have been employed in all ages, but the morality of them cannot be approved. In connexion with this question it may be remarked, (1) that wrong actions are often related in Scripture without express condemnation, because the healthy and enlightened conscience can discern at once they are wrong: (2) that many actions, allowable under the Old Testament dispensation, are not allowable to those who

servant, O king; as I *have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me
35 defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.
36 Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son;* and by them
37 ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. So Hushai David's friend came *into* the city, and Absalom came *into* Jerusalem.

CH. XVI. 1—4. *David met by Ziba with a present.*

16 And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves of* bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred
2 of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.
3 And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And

have received the light of Christ's revelation: (3) that Scripture gives no sanction to the doctrine, maintained even now in some quarters, that political and social morality are not governed by the same rules. See also the notes on 1 Sam. xxvii. 11, xxix. 8.

37. *David's friend*] "The king's friend" was a regular state-officer, the king's confidential adviser. Cp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 33 (E. V., *companion*); 1 Kings iv. 5.

CH. XVI. 1—4. DAVID MET BY ZIBA WITH A PRESENT.

1. *the top of the hill*] See note on ch. xv. 32.

two hundred loaves of bread, &c.] Compare Abigail's present (1 Sam. xxv. 18). Ziba was shrewd enough to foresee the result of the rebellion, and wished to secure the king's favour.

an hundred of summer fruits] Probably cakes of dried figs (so the Vulg.) or dates (so the Sept.). Cp. Amos viii. 1.

a bottle of wine] A skin, holding a considerable quantity.

2. *the wilderness*] See note on ch. xv. 23.

3. *thy master's son*] Mephibosheth is called the son, i.e. grandson, of Ziba's lord Saul in ch. ix. 9. David was hurt by Mephibosheth's apparent ingratitude.

Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, 4
thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5—14. *David cursed by Shimei.*

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence 5
came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and 6
at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty *men were* on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, 7

for he said, To day, &c.] That Ziba was calumniating Mephibosheth is sufficiently obvious. How could Mephibosheth, an insignificant cripple, who had never claimed the crown, or taken any part in politics, expect to be made king, even in the confusion of parties which might ensue upon Absalom's rebellion? Ziba's story was an audacious fiction, invented in the hope of getting a grant of the estate which he was cultivating for Mephibosheth's benefit, and in spite of its improbability, it passed muster in the haste and confusion of the moment.

4. *Behold, thine are all*, &c.] David was rash and hasty in thus treating his grant to Mephibosheth as forfeited by treason without a word of inquiry. This unreflecting impetuosity was a marked fault of his character. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 13 ff.

I humbly beseech thee, &c.] Rather, **I bow myself down**:—equivalent to our "I lay myself at thy feet," an Oriental expression of gratitude:—**let me find favour in thine eyes, my lord, O king.** Cp. 1 Sam. i. 18.

5—14. DAVID CURSED BY SHIMEI.

5. *Bahurim*] See note on ch. iii. 16.

Shimei] See ch. xix. 16—23; 1 Kings ii. 8, 9. His connexion with the clan of Saul accounts for the virulence of his hatred.

6. *And he cast stones*, &c.] The scene is described with an exactness which bespeaks an eye-witness. The road apparently was parallel to a ridge—the "*rib*" or "side of the hill," *v.* 13—and separated from it by a deep but narrow ravine—"let me go *over*," *v.* 9—so that Shimei was out of easy reach, though within a stone's throw of David and his party.

and all the people, &c.] This enhanced the impudent audacity of Shimei's behaviour.

7. *Come out, come out*] **Out! out!** from the land and from thy kingdom into exile.

8 thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* to thy mischief, because thou
9 *art* a bloody man. Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.
10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore

thou bloody man] **Thou man of blood**, thou murderer. Shimei seems to have supplied Cromwell's army with the terms of its resolution "to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to account for the blood he has shed and the mischief he has done to the utmost against the Lord's cause and people in this poor nation." Green's *Short History*, p. 552.

thou man of Belial] **Thou wicked man.** See note on 1 Sam. i. 16.

8. *all the blood of the house of Saul*] Shimei probably refers to the deaths of Saul and his sons at Gilboa, of Abner and Ish-bosheth by treacherous murder, charging David with the guilt of crimes which he had repudiated and punished: possibly also he regarded the execution of Saul's sons (ch. xxi. 1—9), which in all probability had taken place before this time, as a judicial murder. Shimei would not intend to refer to Uriah, though David would feel that it was for his death that the curse was not undeserved.

behold, thou art taken *to thy mischief*] Rather, **behold, thou art in thy calamity.** *To* is the original reading of 1611; *in* of ordinary editions first appeared in the edition of 1629. *To thy mischief*=to thy hurt, a free paraphrase of the Vulg. *premunt te mala tua.*

9. *Then said Abishai*] Consistently with his character on the former occasion when he wished to slay Saul (1 Sam. xxvi. 8), and on the later occasion, when he was for refusing Shimei's suit for pardon (ch. xix. 21). His fiery zeal reminds us of the Sons of Thunder (Luke ix. 54), and David's answer recalls Christ's answer to Peter (John xviii. 10, 11).

this dead dog] See ch. ix. 8, iii. 8, and notes there.

10. *What have I to do with you*] 'What have we in common? leave me alone.' The phrase is used to repel an unwelcome suggestion, and repudiate participation in the thoughts and feelings of another. Cp. ch. xix. 22; John ii. 4.

ye sons of Zeruiah] Joab probably seconded Abishai's request. For David's abhorrence of his nephews' ferocity, see ch. iii. 39.

so let him curse, &c.] This is the rendering of the traditional reading (Qrî). The written text (Kthîbh) may be rendered, *when he curseth, and when the Lord*, &c., *who then shall say*, &c.: or, *for he curseth because the Lord*, &c.

hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all 11
his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my
bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this*
Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the
LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the LORD will 12
look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite
me good for his cursing this day. And as David and 13
his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's
side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw
stones at him, and cast dust. And the king, and all the 14
people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

15—19. *Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem. Hushai's offer of his services.*

And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came 15

11. *this Benjamite*] Who has some plausible ground for spite against a king who has succeeded to the honours once held by his family.

the LORD *hath bidden him*] David recognises Shimei as the divinely appointed instrument for his chastisement, and therefore he can say, "the LORD hath bidden him." But Shimei's cursing was on his part sinful, and God commands no man to sin. God makes use of the evil passions of men to work out His purposes, but those evil passions are not thereby excused or justified. See for example, Gen. xlv. 5; Acts ii. 23. Since He is the Author and Cause of all things, and in a certain sense nothing can be done without His Will, He is sometimes said to do what He permits to be done, to command what He does not forbid. See note on 1 Sam. xxvi. 19: and 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

12. *mine affliction*] This reading is supported by the Sept. and Vulg. and is probably right. Cp. Ps. xxv. 18. The *Qrî* has *mine eye*, which is explained to mean *my grief*, but the expression is unparalleled. The *Kthîbh* gives *mine iniquity*, meaning, 'perhaps the Lord will look graciously upon my guilt and pardon it,' but this does not suit the following clause so well.

will requite me good] Cp. Ps. cix. 26—28.

for his cursing] The E. V. follows the *Qrî*. The *Kthîbh* has *my cursing*, i.e. the curse invoked upon me.

13. *on the hill's side*] See note on *v.* 6.

14. *came weary*] There is no place mentioned to which *there* at the end of the verse can refer. It is clear from ch. xvii. 18, that the halting-place was not Bahurim, but some place beyond it. We must suppose that the name of the place has fallen out of the text, or that the word for *weary* should be taken as a proper name *to Ayêphîm*. No such place is known, but it would be an appropriate name for a caravansary or resting-place for travellers.

16 *to* Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save 17 the king, God save the king. And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is* this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not 18 with thy friend? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. 19 And again, whom should I serve? *should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

20—23. *Ahithophel's counsel.*

20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among 21 you what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are*

15—19. ABSALOM'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM. HUSHAI'S OFFER OF HIS SERVICES.

15. *And Absalom*, &c.] The narrative of Absalom's proceedings is continued from ch. xv. 12, 37. He seems to have entered Jerusalem soon after David left it, perhaps about noon on the same day.

the men of Israel] The term *Israel* is constantly applied to Absalom's followers in this narrative. It is used in a general sense, and not to signify the northern tribes as distinguished from Judah, for the strength of the insurrection, originally at any rate, lay in the south. See note on ch. xv. 10. Those who remained faithful to David are never called *the men of Judah*, but simply *the people* (ch. xv. 17, 23, 24, 30; xvi., xvii., xviii., xix).

16. *God save the king*] Or, **Long live the king**: lit. *Let the king live:* vivat Rex. See note on 1 Sam. x. 24.

20—23. AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL.

21. *And Ahithophel said*, &c.] Ahithophel advised Absalom to make a decisive assumption of royal authority by publicly taking possession of the royal harem. This act was a claim of heirship and succession[1], and was not regarded with abhorrence by the Israelites, whose feelings on such matters were blunted by the practice of polygamy. See note on ch. iii. 7. Its object was to make the breach between Absalom and his father irreparable, and to strengthen the resolution of his followers, by proving that the rebellion was not to end in his securing a pardon from his father and leaving them to their fate, but that he was determined to run all risks.

[1] A similar custom existed among the heathen Saxons. See Green's *Making of England*, p. 246.

with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon 22
the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's
concubines in the sight of all Israel. And the counsel of 23
Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, *was* as
if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the
counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

CH. XVII. 1—14. *Ahithophel's counsel defeated by Hushai.*

Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now 17
choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue
after David *this* night: and I will come upon him while he 2
is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and
all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite
the king only: and I will bring back all the people unto 3
thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: *so*

22. *upon the top of the house*] The fact that the very roof on which David was walking when he secretly conceived his great sin was the public scene of its punishment, and the nature of the punishment, corresponding to the nature of the sin, as Nathan had foretold, make this retribution signally striking. See ch. xii. 11, 12; and cp. 2 Kings ix. 25, 26.

23. *had inquired at the oracle of God*] Lit. *had inquired of the word of God* = had inquired of God, which was done by means of the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate upon the High-priest's ephod. Cp. 1 Sam. x. 22.

CH. XVII. 1—14. AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL DEFEATED BY HUSHAI.

1. *this night*] The night following David's flight and Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem. Ahithophel's advice, given no doubt at the council described in ch. xvi. 20, was excellent. The success of the rebellion would be ensured by striking a sudden blow, and securing the king's person. A small body of picked troops might easily have overtaken David, who was not likely to get more than twelve or fifteen miles from Jerusalem the first day.

2. *will make him afraid*] The word describes the *panic* caused by a sudden night attack, in the confusion of which David might easily be seized.

3. *the man*, &c.] Lit. *As the returning of all is the man whom thou seekest.* The return of all the people to thee will be ensured by the removal of David. If that is effected, there will be no civil war. Ahithophel's use of the term "return" is a subtle flattery, implying that David's followers were deserting their lawful sovereign. But the true text is not improbably preserved by the Sept.: "And I will cause all the people to return unto thee, as the bride returneth to her husband. Only one man's life dost thou seek, and unto all the people

4 all the people shall be *in* peace. And the saying pleased
5 Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear
6 likewise what he saith. And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if
7 not; speak thou. And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.
8 For, (said Hushai,) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty *men*, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father
9 *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when *some* of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth *it* will say, There is a
10 slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty *man*, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.
11 Therefore I counsel *that* all Israel be generally gathered

there shall be peace." The defection of the people is compared to the momentary desertion of a bride, who speedily returns to her husband.

4. *the elders of Israel*] Who were sitting in council with Absalom. For the various functions of the elders, see note on 1 Sam. viii. 4.

5. *let us hear likewise what he saith*] **Let us hear what he too has to say**, as well as Ahithophel.

7. *The counsel*, &c.] **The counsel which Ahithophel hath counselled this time is not good**: in contrast to his previous counsel (ch. xvi. 21), which Hushai pretends to approve.

8. *For, said Hushai*] **And Hushai said.**

chafed in their minds] Lit. *bitter of soul:* embittered and exasperated. Cp. Jud. xviii. 25; 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

as a bear robbed of her whelps] Proverbial for its ferocity. Cp. Prov. xvii. 12; Hos. xiii. 8. The Syrian bear is said to be particularly ferocious. See 1 Sam. xvii. 34. The Sept. adds, "and like a savage sow in the plain," which is rather a Greek than a Hebrew simile. Cp. Hom. *Il.* xiii. 471 ff.

9. *in some pit, or in some* other *place*] Omit *other*. By *pit* is meant a cave or natural hiding-place; by *place* an artificially strengthened position.

when some of them be overthrown] Or, **when he** (David) **falleth upon them** (his assailants).

11. *be generally gathered*] Generally = 'as a whole': as we might say, "that there be a general gathering of all Israel."

unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude; and *that* thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place 12
where he shall be found, and we *will light* upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel 13
bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. And Ab- 14
salom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

from Dan even to Beer-sheba] See note on 1 Sam. iii. 20.

the sand, &c.] A common figure for an innumerable multitude. Cp. Gen. xxii. 17; xli. 49; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 27; &c.

and that thou go, &c.] Or, **and that thy presence go in the midst of them**; as the Sept., Vulg., and other versions read instead of *to the battle.*

12. *as the dew*] As the innumerable drops of dew settle on the ground unseen and unheard, so will our vast army completely overwhelm him without perceptible effort.

13. *into the river*] **Into the ravine.** Hushai intentionally indulges in an extravagant hyperbole in order to describe the irresistible power of the force that would be gathered, if he means to suggest the idea of dragging a city bodily down from the rock on which, like most fortified cities, it was built: but perhaps he means no more than that the city should be conquered and demolished as a penalty. Compare Micah's prophecy of the destruction of Samaria, which stood on a hill: "I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley" (Micah i. 6).

14. Hushai saw that it was essential to gain time, "in order," to quote the words of Tacitus, "to give the disaffected time to repent, and the loyal time to unite: crimes gain by hasty action, better counsels by delay." (Tac. *Hist.* i. 32.) His scheme was cleverly devised to appeal to Absalom's vanity and love of display. It seemed safe and easy: it was a far more attractive idea for Absalom to march in person against David at the head of an immense army, than for him to let Ahithophel complete the revolution by a decisive action at once. His vanity proved his ruin. He forgot that a general levy would involve no slight delay: he forgot that the rising was by no means certain to be general, and that when the first surprise of the insurrection was over, many would return to their allegiance to David. But Absalom and his counsellors were blinded by a divinely ordered infatuation. "Quem vult Deus deperdere, dementat prius."

15—22. *Hushai sends word to David by Jonathan and Ahimaaz.*

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests,
Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the
elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.
16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge
not *this* night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily
pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people
17 that *are* with him. Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by
En-rogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city:
and a wench went and told them; and they went and told
18 king David. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Ab-
salom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came
to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court;
19 whither they went down. And the woman took and spread

15—22. HUSHAI SENDS WORD TO DAVID BY JONATHAN AND AHIMAAZ.

16. *Lodge not this night*] A prudent precaution, for Absalom might change his mind, and follow Ahithophel's counsel after all.

in the plains of the wilderness] Perhaps we should read *at the fords of the wilderness*. See note on ch. xv. 28.

17. *Jonathan and Ahimaaz*] Hushai had evidently communicated David's plan to Zadok and Abiathar, and commissioned the young men to be in waiting at a convenient place.

En-rogel] That is, "The Fuller's Fountain," probably the modern "Fountain of the Virgin," in the valley of the Kidron, just outside the city on the south-east. It was close to "the stone of Zoheleth" (1 Kings i. 9), which has been identified with the cliff *Zahweileh*, on which the modern village of Siloam stands. Others however suppose En-rogel to be the deep and ancient well known as "Job's Well," near the junction of the valleys of the Kidron and Hinnom. En-rogel was a land-mark on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin (Josh. xv. 7; xviii. 16).

they might not be seen] For it was notorious that the high-priests were on David's side. They knew that their movements would be watched, as the next verse shews was the case.

a wench] **The maid-servant**: the definite article probably denotes a particular servant belonging to the household of one of the high-priests. She could go to the fountain for water without exciting suspicion. *Wench*, found here only in the E. V., means *a girl*, usually one of low birth.

18. *a well*] A cistern, dry at the time. The existence of numerous rock-cut cisterns with narrow mouths at *Almît*, the probable site of Bahurim, illustrates the incident. See Pal. Expl. Fund *Quarterly Statement*, Jan. 1881, p. 45.

a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. And when Ab- 20
salom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned *to* Jerusalem. And it came to pass, after they 21
were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. Then David arose, and all the people that 22
were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one *of them* that was not gone over Jordan.

23. *The suicide of Ahithophel.*

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not fol- 23
lowed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him *home* to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

19. *a covering*] **The covering,** either the usual cover of the cistern, or, as the general use of the word suggests, the curtain which hung in the doorway. See Ex. xxvi. 36 (E. V. *hanging*).

ground corn] Bruised or husked wheat, which she spread out as if to dry. The mode of its preparation is referred to in Prov. xxvii. 22, the only other passage in which the word occurs.

20. *The brook of water*] The word *Michal*, translated *brook*, is found here only. It may have been some local name. The woman sent the pursuers off in the wrong direction, and then at once despatched Jonathan and Ahimaaz. Compare the deceit practised by Rahab (Josh. ii. 4 ff.), and by Michal (1 Sam. xix. 12—17). As stated in the note on the latter passage, Holy Scripture affirms the universal duty of Truth without any exception (Lev. xix. 11), nor can it be understood to sanction breaches of this general law by recording them without express disapproval. See also note on ch. xv. 34. It is left to the casuist to discuss whether any necessity is sufficient to justify a falsehood or an act of deception. See Whewell's *Elements of Morality*, Chaps. xv. xvi.

23. The suicide of Ahithophel.

23. *to his city*] Giloh. See ch. xv. 12.

put his household in order] Lit. *gave charge concerning his house:* arranged his affairs and made his will. Cp. 2 Kings xx. 1.

hanged himself] Like Judas (Matt. xxvii. 5). It is the first deliberate

24—26. *Progress of the Rebellion.*

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed
25 over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And
Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab:
which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an
Israelite, that went in to Abigal the daughter of Nahash,
26 sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. So Israel and Absalom
pitched *in* the land of Gilead.

27—29. *Loyal reception of David at Mahanaim.*

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim,

suicide on record, and was prompted by mortification at the rejection of his counsel; by the chagrin of baffled ambition; by the conviction that now the rebellion would inevitably fail, and that he would only live to suffer a traitor's death.

24—26. Progress of the Rebellion.

24. *to Mahanaim*] See note on ch. ii. 8. It was chosen for David's head-quarters as the most important and strongest city in the trans-Jordanic country, which was evidently the least disaffected.

And Absalom passed over Jordan] Before this a considerable interval must have elapsed, during which Absalom was formally anointed (ch. xix. 10), and a general levy of the nation raised according to Hushai's counsel, while David had time to organize his forces and establish himself at Mahanaim.

25. *Amasa*] It has been supposed by some that he is the same as *Amasai* who came to David at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 16—18). But if so, would not the fact of his relationship to David have been mentioned there?

Ithra an Israelite] Called in 1 Chr. ii. 17 *Jether the Ishmeelite*. *Jether* and *Ithra* are different forms of the same name: and *Ishmaelite* should probably be read here in place of *Israelite*, which has no point. The Alex. MS. of the LXX reads *Ishmaelite*, the Vatican MS. *Jezreelite*.

Abigal the daughter of Nahash] Amasa's mother Abigal (or Abigail) was David's sister, and we should naturally infer from 1 Chr. ii. 16, 17 that Abigail and Zeruiah were Jesse's daughters. Who then was Nahash? To this three answers may be given. (1) The obvious one, that she was Jesse's wife, to which the objection is that Nahash is not a woman's name. (2) That Nahash is another name for Jesse, which is the Jewish tradition, but is not supported by any evidence. (3) That Nahash was the first husband of Jesse's wife, so that Abigail and Zeruiah were only step-sisters to David. This view has in its favour the guarded statement of 1 Chr. ii. 16, which does not say that they were Jesse's daughters, but *sisters of his sons*. To go on to identify Nahash with the king of the Ammonites defeated by Saul is mere conjecture. It should be noted that Amasa and Joab were cousins.

that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basons, 28
and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for 29
David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

CH. XVIII. 1—8. *The battle in the forest of Ephraim.*

And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and 18

27—29. LOYAL RECEPTION OF DAVID AT MAHANAIM.

27. *when David was come to Mahanaim*] The narrative is continued from *v.* 24. What follows happened immediately on David's arrival there.

Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah] It is natural to suppose that Shobi was a brother of Hanun (ch. x. 1), who had been invested with some kind of dependent chieftainship by David after the conquest of the Ammonites, and now came to testify his gratitude.

Machir] See note on ch. ix. 4. He who had entertained Jonathan's son now shews hospitality to Jonathan's friend.

Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim] Who came down to escort the king over Jordan on his return, but declined to accompany him to Jerusalem (xix. 31—40). His sons were commended to Solomon's care (1 Kings ii. 7) and as late as the Return from the Captivity a family of priests traced their descent from one of his daughters (Ezra ii. 61—63; Neh. vii. 63). The site of Rogelim is unknown.

28. *beds, and basons*] The Sept. reads "ten beds with coverlets and ten bowls."

parched corn...*parched* pulse] If the text is sound, this is the right explanation: but it is strange that the same word should be twice repeated in one sentence to denote different articles. The Sept. omits the second.

29. *butter*] Curdled milk is probably meant, called *leben* by the modern Arabs, and greatly esteemed as a refreshing drink. Cp. Jud. v. 25.

cheese of kine] So the Targum explains a word which occurs here only. The Vulg. gives *fat calves*, which agrees better with the position of the word after *sheep*.

The people is hungry] **The people hath got hungry**, &c., in their passage through the wilderness.

CH. XVIII. **1—8.** THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST OF EPHRAIM.

1. *And David*, &c.] The events here recorded cannot have followed immediately on David's arrival at Mahanaim. An interval of a

set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over
2 them. And David sent forth a third part of the people
under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of
Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part
under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto
3 the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. But
the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee
away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die,
will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand
of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succour us out of
4 the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you
best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and
all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.
5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai,
saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even*
with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king
6 gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom. So the
people went out *into* the field against Israel: and the battle
7 was in the wood of Ephraim; where the people of Israel

few weeks must be assumed, during which the rival armies were mustered and organized. Cp. note on ch. xvii. 24.

numbered] The word means not merely *to count*, but *to muster* and *review*.

captains of thousands and captains of hundreds] The usual military divisions (1 Sam. xxii. 7; Num. xxxi. 14; and see note on 1 Sam. viii. 12); corresponding originally to the civil divisions instituted by Moses (Ex. xviii. 25). See note on 1 Sam. x. 19.

2. *sent forth...under the hand of Joab*] Better, **put...into the hand of Joab**, i. e. under his command. The army does not take the field until *v.* 6. The division of an army into three bodies seems to have been a common practice. See Jud. vii. 16, ix. 43; 1 Sam. xi. 11. David intended to take the chief command in person.

3. *Thou shalt not go forth*] Compare the protest of David's followers on an earlier occasion (ch. xxi. 17).

but now thou art *worth ten thousand of us*] As the Heb. text stands it must be rendered, *and now there are ten thousand like us;* but, it is implied, none besides like thee. But if we follow the Sept. and Vulg. in reading *thou* for *now*, the sense will be that given by the E. V., which seems best.

that thou succour us out of the city] By sending reinforcements, and securing their retreat in case of a defeat.

5. *all the people heard*] Cp. "in our hearing" in *v.* 12.

6. *in the wood of Ephraim*] "The forest of Ephraim" might naturally be expected to mean the great forest covering the high lands

were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day *of* twenty thousand *men*. For 8
the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9—18. *Absalom's death.*

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Ab- 9
salom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven

of central Palestine in which the tribe of Ephraim settled (Josh. xvii. 15—18). But all the circumstances are in favour of supposing the battle to have been fought on the eastern side of the Jordan. (*a*) Absalom marched into Gilead and encamped there (ch. xvii. 26); David was at Mahanaim; and there is not the slightest hint that either army crossed the Jordan. (*b*) It is implied beforehand that the battle would be in the neighbourhood of Mahanaim (ch. xviii. 3). (*c*) The return of the army to Mahanaim *on the same day* (ch. xix. 2—5), would scarcely have been possible, had the battle been fought on the west of the Jordan. These considerations make it all but certain that "the wood of Ephraim" was some part of the great forests of Gilead. The origin of the name can only be conjectured. It may possibly have been derived from the connexion of Ephraim with the trans-Jordanic Manasseh, or from some incident such as the slaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah (Jud. xii. 6).

8. *the wood devoured more*, &c.] The explanation generally given is that they perished in the pits and precipices and morasses of the forest: but this seems unlikely. More probably it means that owing to the nature of the ground more were slain in the pursuit through the forest, than in the actual battle.

9—18. Absalom's Death.

9. *And Absalom*, &c.] **And Absalom happened to find himself in the presence of David's servants: now Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule**, &c. In the course of the flight, Absalom found himself among enemies: he turned to escape into the denser part of the forest. The mule which he rode—perhaps David's own—was a mark of royalty (1 Kings i. 33, 38).

a great oak] **The great terebinth**; the article seems to shew that the tree was well known in after times. The Heb. *êlah* is generally said to denote the terebinth or turpentine tree, which is not unlike the oak in general appearance: but in the forests on the E. of Jordan, oaks are far more common than terebinths, and some kind of oak may be meant.

his head caught hold of the oak] His head was caught in the forked

and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went
10 away. And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and
11 said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels of* silver, and a
12 girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels of* silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware *that* none *touch* the young man Absalom.
13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou
14 thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three

boughs of the tree, and he hung there, stunned and helpless. Perhaps his long thick hair got entangled, but there is nothing to support the common idea that he was suspended merely by his hair.

11. *ten* shekels] *Shekels* is rightly supplied, as in 1 Kings x. 29, and elsewhere. The shekel weighed about half an ounce; but its real value at the time cannot be fixed.

a girdle] An essential article of Oriental dress, often of costly materials and highly ornamented. Cp. 1 Sam. xviii. 4.

12. *Beware that none touch*] Or, **Have a care, all of you, of the young man Absalom**: lit. as in the margin, *whosoever* ye be. But the Sept. and Vulg. read *for my sake*, as in *v.* 5, in place of *whosoever*.

13. *I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life*] I should not only have disobeyed the king, but have been false to my own interest and forfeited my life. The Kthîbh reads *his life*, thus: *Or if I had dealt deceitfully against his life, there is nothing hid*, &c.: i.e., if I had treacherously slain him contrary to the king's command, it would certainly have come to the king's ears, and I should have been put to death. The Sept. has a different reading, connecting the first clause of *v.* 13 with *v.* 14, thus: "Take care of the young man Absalom for my sake, that ye do no harm against his life: and there is no matter hid," &c.

wouldest have set thyself against me] Wouldest have taken part against me with the king. The man was well aware of Joab's unscrupulous character.

14. *three darts*] Since the word used means elsewhere *rods* or *staves* (Ex. xxi. 20; 2 Sam. xxiii. 21), and the wounds inflicted were not at once mortal, it seems that Joab struck Absalom brutally with pointed wooden staves, the first weapons which came to hand, in fact in a kind of way *impaled* him as a traitor, and left his squires to give him the *coup de grâce*.

darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak. And 15
ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about
and smote Absalom, and slew him. And Joab blew the 16
trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel:
for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, 17
and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very
great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every
one to his tent. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken 18
and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's
dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in
remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name:
and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

through the heart] Not literally *through his heart*, for the blows did not kill him outright; but *into the midst of his body.*

15. *slew him*] Absalom's death was unquestionably the speediest and surest means of putting an end to the rebellion; and Joab probably took credit to himself for serving his country while he satisfied his private revenge (ch. xiv. 30).

16. *blew the trumpet*] Sounded the recall to stop further pursuit. Cp. ch. ii. 28, xx. 22.

17. *a very great heap of stones*] A monument of shame over the rebel's grave, as over that of Achan (Josh. vii. 26), and the king of Ai (Josh. viii. 29). Some think it was symbolic of the stoning which was the penalty of a rebel son (Deut. xxi. 20, 21). It is still a custom in the East for passers by to cast stones on the grave of a malefactor. See *The Land and the Book*, p. 490.

fled every one to his tent] To his home. The use of the word *tent* is a relic of primitive nomad life. Cp. ch. xx. 1, 22.

18. *the king's dale*] In Gen. xiv. 17 "the king's dale" is given as an alternative name for "the valley of Shaveh" in which the king of Sodom met Abram. But its situation is uncertain. Josephus (*Antiq.* VII. 10. 3) says that Absalom's monument was two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and in accordance with this statement the Tomb of Absalom is shewn in the valley of the Kidron. But this building is of Roman work; and it cannot even mark the site of Absalom's monument, for the "king's dale" was a broad open valley (Heb. *êmek*), not a narrow ravine like the Kidron (Heb. *nachal*).

I have no son] His three sons (ch. xiv. 27) must have all died young.

Absalom's place] Lit. *Absalom's hand*, i. e. monument. Cp. 1 Sam. xv. 12. The historian evidently intends to mark the contrast between this splendid cenotaph, and the heap of stones which marked the rebel's grave in the forest of Ephraim.

19—32. *The news carried to David.*

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run,
and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged
20 him of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou *shalt*
not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another
day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the
21 king's son is dead. Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the
king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto
22 Joab, and ran. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet
again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run
after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my
23 son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready? But how-
soever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run.
Then Ahimaaz ran *by* the way of the plain, and overran
24 Cushi. And David sat between the two gates: and the
watchman went *up* to the roof over the gate unto the wall,
and lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running
25 alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And

19—32. THE NEWS CARRIED TO DAVID.

19. *hath avenged him of his enemies*] Lit. *judged him out of the hand of his enemies:* pronounced a favourable verdict in his cause and delivered him. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15; Ps. xliii. 1.

20. *bear tidings*] The word with rare exceptions means *to bear good tidings*, and this meaning should be retained here and in *v.* 19. Joab would not let Ahimaaz have the thankless task of carrying news which to the king would be no good news.

21. *Cushi*] Rather, **the Cushite**, an Ethiopian slave in Joab's service, who would have little to lose by the king's displeasure.

22. *thou hast no tidings ready*] Probably, **thou hast no good tidings to get a reward**; cp. the Sept. "thou hast no good tidings for profit if thou goest:" and the Vulg. "thou wilt not be a bearer of good tidings."

23. *by the way of the plain*] "The plain" (Heb. *kikkar*) is the technical term for the floor of the valley through which the Jordan runs. In our ignorance of the exact position of the battlefield, we cannot trace the routes taken by the rival runners with certainty. But in all probability what is meant is that Ahimaaz struck down into the Jordan valley, and ran by a longer but easier route to Mahanaim, while the Cushite took the direct but more difficult route over the hills.

24. *between the two gates*] In the space between the inner and outer gates of the city gateway.

to the roof over the gate unto the wall] To that side of the flat roof of the gateway which was in the outer wall of the city.

the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman 26
saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the 27
watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost *is* like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. 28
And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lift up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, *Is* the young man Absalom 29
safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*. And the king said *unto him*, Turn 30

25. *If he be alone*, &c.] If the army had been routed, a number of fugitives would have been seen coming together.

26. *unto the porter*] The Sept. reads "into the gate." The difference is a question of vowel points only.

27. *He is a good man*, &c.] The king rightly judged, that Joab would not choose a distinguished messenger like Ahimaaz to carry bad news (*v.* 20).

28. *All is well*] Lit. **Peace!** The usual word of greeting had special significance at such a time.

he fell down] An act of homage to the king. See note on ch. xiv. 4, and cp. 1 Sam. xx. 41, xxv. 23.

delivered up] Lit. *shut up:* restrained and confined within bounds, instead of leaving them at large to work their will. Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 8, and the opposite expression in ch. xxii. 20.

29. *Is the young man Absalom safe*] Taking up the exclamation of Ahimaaz; **Is it well with the young man Absalom?** lit. *Is there peace to the young man Absalom?* Cp. 2 Kings iv. 26. "Not only the question itself, but the very terms of it, breathe the tenderness of David's feelings. Absalom is 'the youth,' as if his youth were a full excuse for his conduct." *Speaker's Comm.*

the king's servant] The Cushite, to whom Ahimaaz points as he comes up. But it is not improbable that *the king's servant* is an alternative reading for *thy servant*, originally written in the margin, and afterwards inserted in the text, so that we should read simply *when Joab sent thy servant.*

I knew not what it was] Ahimaaz was eager to be first with the good news, but deliberately concealed the bad. Can it be wondered at that his regard for truth had been weakened when we remember the business he had been engaged in at David's command?

aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood
31 still. And behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee *this* day
32 of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushi, *Is* the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33. *David's mourning for Absalom.*

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.

CH. XIX. 1—8. *David roused from his grief by Joab.*

19 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and
2 mourneth for Absalom. And the victory that day was

31. *Tidings*, &c.] The phrase is not so abrupt in the Heb., and more suitable in the slave's mouth. **Let my lord the king receive the good tidings, that**, &c.

hath avenged] See note on *v.* 19.

33. DAVID'S MOURNING FOR ABSALOM.

33. *was much moved*] Better perhaps, **was sore troubled.** Sept. ἐταράχθη is a good rendering. This passionate outburst of grief was due not only to the tenderness of affection, which was so striking a trait in David's character, but to the bitterness of the thought that the rebel, the would-be parricide, was thus

> "Cut off even in the blossoms of his sin,
> No reckoning made, but sent to his account
> With all his imperfections on his head;"

and that this terrible catastrophe was the fruit and the punishment of his own crimes. The heart-broken cry "Would God I had died for thee" was not only the utterance of self-sacrificing love, but the confession that he had himself deserved the punishment which fell upon another. Cp. ch. xxiv. 17.

would God, &c.] So Moses (Ex. xxxii. 32), and so St Paul (Rom. ix. 3), would have sacrificed themselves, had it been possible, to save others.

CH. XIX. 1—8. DAVID ROUSED FROM HIS GRIEF BY JOAB.

2. *the victory*] The Heb. word means literally *the salvation* or *deliverance*. Cp. 1 Sam. ix. 16, xi. 3; 2 Sam. iii. 18, &c.

turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day *how* the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day *into* the city, as 3
people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and the king cried *with* a loud 4
voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son. And Joab came *into* the house to the king, and said, Thou 5
hast shamed *this* day the faces of all thy servants, which *this* day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; in that thou lovest thine enemies, and 6
hatest thy friends: for thou hast declared *this* day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for *this* day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died *this* day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go 7
forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear

3. *gat them by stealth*, &c.] Out of respect for the king's sorrow the army stole into the city silently in small parties, like disgraced fugitives, instead of entering in military order with shouts of triumph for the victory.

that day] Clearly the day of the battle, which must therefore have been fought in the neighbourhood of Mahanaim. See notes on ch. xviii. 6.

as people, &c.] Better, **as the people steal in who have disgraced themselves by fleeing in the battle.**

4. *covered his face*] See note on ch. xv. 30.

5. *Joab came into the house to the king*] The crisis illustrates the good as well as the bad features of Joab's character—his loyalty to David, and his practical sagacity, as well as his hard unsympathetic nature. Exaggerated and unfeeling as his speech was, it roused David from the extravagance of his grief to a sense of his duty, and saved him from flinging away the fruits of the victory.

Thou hast shamed, &c.] Disappointed their hopes of rejoicing for the victory: treated them like offenders instead of benefactors.

have saved thy life, &c.] For had Absalom been victorious, he would doubtless have put to death all rival claimants to the throne, and possibly other members of the king's household. Cp. Jud. ix. 5; 1 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 11; 2 Kings x. 6, xi. 1.

6. *neither princes nor servants*] Neither the **captains** of the army (ch. xviii. 1, 5), nor the soldiers.

7. *speak comfortably*] Speak to them in a friendly way, encourage them, and appease their discontent.

I swear, &c.] This is not a threat that he will persuade the army to desert David; but an asseveration in the strongest possible terms

by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee *this* night: and that *will be* worse unto thee than
8 all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now. Then the king rose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9—15. *Negotiations for David's restoration. His return.*

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.
10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king
11 back? And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his

that they will not continue faithful to a king who allows a private grief to outweigh his gratitude for their services.

8. *in the gate*] Where kings and rulers were accustomed to give audience to their subjects. See note on ch. xv. 2.

for Israel had fled] The words should begin a new sentence, **But Israel had fled,** &c. *Israel*, that part of the nation which had followed Absalom, is contrasted with "the people," i.e. David's army. The sentence resumes the narrative from ch. xviii. 17, and prepares the way for the account which follows.

9—15. NEGOTIATIONS FOR DAVID'S RESTORATION. HIS RETURN.

10. *whom we anointed*] The anointing of Absalom is not elsewhere mentioned.

At the end of the verse the Sept. adds, "And the word of all Israel came to the king," that is, either he heard of the movement for his restoration, or he actually received overtures from Israel. The clause is necessary to introduce *v.* 11.

11. *the elders of Judah*] The representatives of the tribe, who would naturally be its leaders in the restoration of the king. Cp. ch. v. 3. Their backwardness is explained by the prominent part which Judah had taken in the insurrection (see note on ch. xv. 10), while David's message to the priests was prompted by the desire to conciliate the good will of the most powerful tribe of the nation, and persuade them to take a leading part in his recall.

seeing the speech...even to his house] The words *even to his house*

house. Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: 12
wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? And 13
say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not *of* my bone, and *of* my
flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not
captain of the host before me continually in the room of
Joab. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, 14
even as *the heart of* one man; so that they sent *this word*
unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants. So the 15
king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to
Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over
Jordan.

16—44. *David's return. Episodes on the journey.*

16—23. *Shimei sues for pardon.*

And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of 16

give no satisfactory sense, and are probably an accidental repetition of the previous *to his house:* and the clause *seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king* may either have stood here originally as well as at the end of *v.* 10, where it is certainly required, or have been repeated by a transcriber's error.

12. *my bones and my flesh*] See note on ch. v. 1. *Bones* should be, as there, **bone**.

13. *Art thou not* of *my bone, and* of *my flesh*] **Art thou not my bone and my flesh**, exactly as in *v.* 12. Amasa was David's nephew, the son of his sister or step-sister Abigail. See ch. xvii. 25. Of course the message was to be privately conveyed to Amasa through the priests. It was a bold stroke of policy to promise the post of commander-in chief to the general of the rebel army. By so doing, David designed at once to secure the allegiance of that army, and to punish Joab for killing Absalom in defiance of his command. But it was hardly prudent. Joab was certain not to submit to it tamely: Amasa's military skill was probably inferior, and his loyalty remained to be proved.

God do so, &c.] See note on ch. iii. 9.

in the room of Joab] i.e. instead of. Room = place, space, from A.-S. *rúm*, Germ. *Raum*. Cp. Matt. ii. 22.

14. *And he bowed*, &c.] By this message David inclined the hearts of the men of Judah to restore him to the throne.

15. *to Gilgal*] Gilgal, between Jericho and the Jordan, was the rendezvous for the representatives of Judah—probably the elders—who were sent to escort the king back to Jerusalem.

16—44. DAVID'S RETURN. EPISODES ON THE JOURNEY.

16—23. SHIMEI SUES FOR PARDON.

16. *Shimei*] See ch. xvi. 5 ff. Shimei and Ziba came with guilty

Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to
17 meet king David. And *there were* a thousand men of
Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of
Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him;
18 and they went over Jordan before the king. And there went
over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to
do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell
19 down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; and
said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto
me, neither do thou remember *that* which thy servant did
perversely the day that my lord the king went out of
20 Jerusalem, that the king should take *it* to his heart. For
thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, be-
hold, I am come the first *this* day of all the house of Joseph
21 to go down to meet my lord the king. But Abishai the son
of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to
death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?
22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of

consciences to curry favour by seeming to shew special zeal in bringing back the king.

17. *And* there were *a thousand men of Benjamin with him*] Omit *there were*, and join this clause to *v.* 16.

they went over Jordan before the king] Ziba and his retinue dashed into the river and crossed it—the word for *went over* is a peculiar one, expressing impetuous movement—to shew their zeal by meeting the king on the eastern bank.

18. *And there went over a ferry-boat*] **And the ferry-boat was passing to and fro**, placed at the service of the king by the men of Judah.

as he was come over Jordan] This probably means *as David was crossing over the Jordan*, i.e. during the general proceedings of the transit, not necessarily during the actual passage. Shimei seems to have crossed along with Ziba to meet the king on the eastern bank. David's crossing is not mentioned till *v.* 39.

20. *the house of Joseph*] The ten tribes of Israel as distinguished from Judah are thus named from Ephraim, the most powerful tribe among them (Gen. xlviii. 5). Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68; 1 Kings xi. 28; Amos v. 6. Shimei the Benjamite claims to be the first representative of Israel to welcome the king.

21. *Abishai*] True to his fierce, impetuous character. See ch. xvi. 9.

cursed the LORD's *anointed*] Since the king was Jehovah's representative, to curse him was almost as heinous an offence as to curse Jehovah Himself. Ex. xxii. 28; Lev. xxiv. 15; 1 Kings xxi. 10.

Zeruiah, that ye should *this* day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death *this* day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am this* day king over Israel? There- 23
fore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

24—30. *Mephibosheth's meeting with David.*

And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet 24
the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace. And it came to 25
pass, when he was come *to* Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my 26
servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me

22. *adversaries*] Opposing my true interests. The Heb. word is *satan*. Cp. Matt. xvi. 23.

that I am *this day king*] The rejoicing of the day which saw him restored to his kingdom must not be marred by any bloodshed. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 13.

23. *the king sware unto him*] David cannot be acquitted of breaking the spirit if not the letter of his oath by the charge which he gave to Solomon (1 Kings ii. 8 ff.).

24—30. MEPHIBOSHETH'S MEETING WITH DAVID.

24. *had neither dressed his feet*, &c.] The neglect of his person, the unwashed feet, the untrimmed moustache, the soiled garments, were outward signs of extreme grief. Cp. ch. xii. 20; Ezek. xxiv. 17. The Sept. adds "nor trimmed his nails," after "dressed his feet" (see Deut. xxi. 12), but the words are perhaps only a duplicate rendering of the Hebrew.

beard] Properly **moustache**. The word occurs elsewhere only in connexion with the custom of covering the upper lip or moustache in mourning. See Lev. xiii. 45; Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22; Mic. iii. 7.

25. *when he was come* to *Jerusalem*] If the reading is right, the meeting between David and Mephibosheth must have taken place in Jerusalem, and is introduced here out of the strictly chronological order, because of the mention of Ziba in *v.* 17. "Came down" in *v.* 24 must then be explained 'came down from his house in the highlands of Benjamin near Gibeah to Jerusalem,' not 'came down from Jerusalem to the Jordan.' The conclusion of *v.* 30 agrees with the supposition that Mephibosheth met David in Jerusalem. This is better than rendering *when Jerusalem* (i.e. the inhabitants of Jerusalem) *came*, which is forced, or emending *from Jerusalem*, which is a conjecture supported by no external authority of value.

an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because
27 thy servant *is* lame. And he hath slandered thy servant
unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel
28 of God: do therefore what *is* good in thine eyes. For all
of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the
king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did
eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to
29 cry any more unto the king? And the king said unto him,
Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said,
30 Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said
unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord
the king is come *again* in peace unto his own house.

31—40. *Barzillai's farewell to David.*

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim,

26. *said, I will saddle me an ass*] Meaning of course, *I will have my ass saddled.* The Sept. however reads, *said unto him, Saddle me the ass,* which certainly suits the context better. Apparently Ziba, after receiving the order, saddled the asses, loaded them with provisions, and went to meet David with his fictitious story (ch. xvi. 1), leaving Mephibosheth in the lurch.

27. *as an angel of God*] To discern the truth, and decide justly. Cp. ch. xiv. 17, 20.

28. *were but dead men*] For David might have put them all to death. Possibly there is an allusion to the surrender of Saul's sons to the Gibeonites (ch. xxi. 6—9).

what right, &c.] Since all David's favours to him were undeserved, he had no ground for making a complaint, and demanding the restoration of his property as a right.

29. *Thou and Ziba divide the land*] This is usually supposed to be a compromise between the two claimants, either because David suspected the truth of Mephibosheth's story, or because he was unwilling to alienate Ziba, and possibly a considerable party of Benjamites, by entirely revoking the grant to him (ch. xvi. 4). But it may be a confirmation of the original arrangement by which Ziba was to be Mephibosheth's tenant, and as he certainly did not cultivate the land for nothing, might be said to share it with him.

30. *Yea, let him take all*] Mephibosheth's affection was for his master, not for his property. There is no reason for supposing that his version of the story was false and Ziba's true, in spite of Blunt's ingenious arguments to prove that he was a traitor and a hypocrite (*Undes. Coinc.* p. 157 ff.).

31—40. BARZILLAI'S FAREWELL TO DAVID.

31. *Barzillai*] See ch. xvii. 27.

and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him *over* Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore 32
years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, 33
and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai 34
said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king *unto* Jerusalem? I *am this* day four- 35
score years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing *men* and singing *women?* wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little *way* over Jordan 36
with the king: and why should the king recompense *it* me *with* such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn 37
back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. And the 38
king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him *that* which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee. And 39
all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was

32. *provided...of sustenance*] An obsolete use of the preposition *of* where we now employ *with*.

lay] i.e. abode. Cp. Josh. ii. 1, *marg*.

33. *I will feed thee*] **I will provide thee with sustenance**; the same word as in *v.* 32, and Gen. xlv. 11 (E. V. *nourish*).

35. *fourscore years*] Cp. Ps. xc. 10.

singing men and singing women] Musicians were a part of royal state (Eccl. ii. 8); banquets were commonly enlivened by music. See Is. v. 11, 12, xxiv. 8, 9; Am. vi. 4—6.

37. and be buried *by the grave*, &c.] The ancient affection for the family sepulchre is very remarkable. See Jud. viii. 32; 2 Sam. ii. 32, xvii. 23, xxi. 14; 1 Kings xiii. 22.

Chimham] Barzillai's son, who with his brothers was specially commended to Solomon's care (1 Kings ii. 7). From the mention of "the habitation of Chimham which is by Bethlehem" in Jer. xli. 17, it has been ingeniously inferred that Chimham received a grant of land from David's patrimony at Bethlehem, which retained his name for at least four centuries. See Stanley's *Lect.* II. 152.

39. *all the people*] David's followers, who are repeatedly termed *the people* in this narrative.

come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and
40 he returned unto his own place. Then the king went on to
Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people
of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of
Israel.

41—43. *Dispute between the men of Judah and the men of Israel.*

41 And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and
said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah
stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his house-
42 hold, and all David's men with him, over Jordan? And all
the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the
king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for
this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost?* or hath
43 he given us *any* gift? And the men of Israel answered the

kissed Barzillai, and blessed him] A farewell salute. Cp. Gen. xxxi. 55.

41—43. DISPUTE BETWEEN THE MEN OF JUDAH AND THE MEN OF ISRAEL.

41. *And behold, all the men of Israel*] This must be read in connexion with the preceding verse which introduces and explains it. The northern tribes had been foremost in proposing the restoration (*vv.* 9, 10), but owing no doubt to tribal jealousies, they had not been invited by the men of Judah to the gathering at Gilgal to welcome the king. Consequently only a fraction of them, probably those from the immediate neighbourhood and the trans-Jordanic country, were there. But while the king was still at Gilgal, the rest of the Israelite representatives arrived, and complained to David that they had been unwarrantably forestalled by Judah, and cheated of the honour and privilege of escorting him back. Cp. the instances of Ephraimite jealousy in Jud. viii. 1, xii. 1.

stolen thee away] Brought thee home without our knowledge. They justly censured the men of Judah for doing by themselves that which should have been the united act of the whole nation, and possibly suspected that David himself was not altogether blameless (*vv.* 11, 12).

42. *to us*] Lit. *to me:* and so *art thou angry:* and in *v.* 43 the pronouns are singular throughout; each party being as it were personified and regarded as a unit.

42. *have we eaten at all of the king's cost*, &c.] They defend themselves by alleging the purity of their motives. Some see in the words a side-thrust at the Benjamites, who had enjoyed special privileges during Saul's reign (1 Sam. xxii. 7).

men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

Ch. XX. *Sheba's Rebellion.*

1, 2. *Fresh outbreak of rebellion, headed by Sheba.*

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose 20
name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither

43. *ten parts*] The northern tribes claimed a share of the king in proportion to their number. Ephraim and Manasseh are counted as one in the reckoning of Israel as *ten* tribes. Cp. 1 Kings xi. 31, 35.

and we have also more right *in David than ye*] **And even in David we have more right than ye**: lit. *I...than thou.* They claim a share of the king, as king, in proportion to their number, and maintain this to be their right even in the case of David, whom the men of Judah might assert to belong specially to them as being their kinsman. But the Sept. preserves (in addition to a rendering of the present Heb. text), a different and very remarkable reading, which is perhaps the true one: *and I am the firstborn rather than thou.* Reuben, the natural firstborn, forfeited his birthright, and it was transferred to Joseph, the eldest son of Jacob's second wife. In virtue of the birthright Joseph inherited a double portion (Deut. xxi. 17) by Jacob's adoption of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. See 1 Chron. v. 1, 2; Gen. xlviii. 22; Josh. xvi. 4. It was most natural for Ephraim, speaking on behalf of the northern tribes, "the house of Joseph" (*v.* 20), to assert such a claim at the present crisis.

why then, &c.] Better: **why then hast thou despised me? was not my word the first for bringing back my king?** a reference to the movement described in *vv.* 9, 10.

Ch. XX. Sheba's Rebellion.

1, 2. Fresh outbreak of rebellion, headed by Sheba.

1. *there*] At Gilgal. The dispute offered an immediate opening to a bold and ambitious leader, who hoped to restore the sovereignty to the tribe of Benjamin.

a man of Belial] **A worthless** or **wicked** man. Cp. 1 Sam. x. 27, and note on 1 Sam. i. 16.

the son of Bichri] Rather, **a Bichrite**, or member of the clan tracing its descent from Becher the second son of Benjamin (Gen. xlvi. 21).

part] Better, **portion**, a different word from that in ch. xix. 43, and the same as that in 1 Kings xii. 16.

have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents,
2 O Israel. So every man of Israel went up from after David,
and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah
clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3. *David's return to Jerusalem.*

3 And David came to his house *at* Jerusalem; and the king
took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to
keep the house, and put them *in* ward, and fed them, but
went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day
of their death, living in widowhood.

4—13. *The pursuit of Sheba. Amasa murdered by Joab.*

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of
5 Judah *within* three days, and be thou here present. So
Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried
longer than the set time which he had appointed him.
6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son

the son of Jesse] There is a touch of contempt in this name for David. Cp. 1 Sam. xx. 27, 30, 31, xxii. 7, 8, 9, 13, xxv. 10.

every man to his tents] Nominally a call to disperse and return to their homes (1 Sam. xiii. 2; 2 Sam. xviii. 17); really an invitation to join him in rebellion. The same words served as the signal for the revolt from Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 16).

2. *went up*] From Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan to the hill country of Ephraim.

3. David's return to Jerusalem.

3. *living in widowhood*] Either **in widowhood for life**, or as the Targum explains it, **in widowhood while their husband was still alive.** Since they had been appropriated by Absalom, they could no longer be regarded as members of the royal harem, nor could they be set at liberty.

4—13. The pursuit of Sheba. Amasa murdered by Joab.

4. *to Amasa*] The commission was given to Amasa in fulfilment of the promise privately made to him (ch. xix. 13).

Assemble me the men of Judah] Clearly then "the men of Judah" in *v.* 2 were only a small body of representatives.

5. *he tarried longer*] Some may have resented the change of generals and distrusted Amasa; some may have been half-hearted about David's restoration; so that he found that the task took longer than he expected.

6. *to Abishai*] David now gave his orders to Abishai, being determined at any rate to supersede Joab. For the moment Joab seemed to

of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. And there went out after 7
him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty *men:* and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri. When they *were* at 8
the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on *was* girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. And 9
Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in 10
Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*,

acquiesce, and marched out under his brother's command (*v.* 7), intending to wait his opportunity. This speedily presented itself: without scruple he murdered his rival, and then by Abishai's consent, resumed his old position as commander-in-chief (*vv.* 10, 11).

thy lord's servants] The bodies of troops mentioned in *v.* 7, which formed a small standing army.

escape us] A phrase of doubtful meaning, found nowhere else. Either as E.V. following the Vulg. *escape us:* or *pluck out our eye*=do us serious injury: or as the Sept. *overshadow our eyes*=cause us anxiety.

7. *the Cherethites, and the Pelethites*] See note on ch. viii. 18.

the mighty men] Or *Gibbôrîm.* See note on ch. xv. 18.

8. *the great stone which is in Gibeon*] Some isolated rock, well known as a landmark.

went before them] Lit. *came before them*, i.e. **met them**, apparently as he was returning to Jerusalem, after raising an army in Benjamin as well as in Judah.

And Joab's garment, &c.] This description of Joab's dress is intended to explain how he contrived to stab Amasa without his design being suspected. In the girdle which he wore over his military dress was stuck a dagger. As he met Amasa he contrived to let this fall out of its sheath on the ground. He picked it up in his left hand, and the movement being apparently purely accidental, excited no alarm in Amasa's mind.

as he went forth it fell out] As he went out to meet Amasa. But it does not appear *whence* Joab went out, and the words may also be rendered, *and it* (the sheath) *came out* (from the girdle), *and it* (the sword) *fell down.* The Sept. has a simpler reading, involving a slight change in the Heb. text: *and the sword came out and fell down.*

9. *took Amasa by the beard*] It is said to be still customary among the Arabs and Turks to lay hold of a person's beard in giving him the kiss of welcome.

10. *in the fifth rib*] **In the belly.** See note on ch. ii. 23.

and shed out his bowels to the ground, and strake him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother
11 pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he
12 that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway *into* the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when
13 he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14—22. *Sheba besieged in Abel-Beth-Maachah.*

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and *to* Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were

strake him not again] Cp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 8. *Strake* is an archaism for *struck*. Cp. ch. xii. 15; Acts xxvii. 17.

So Joab] Better, **But Joab**, &c. Covered with the stains of murder (1 Kings ii. 5), Joab started in pursuit of Sheba, leaving his victim where he fell.

11. *one of Joab's men*] One of Joab's **young men**, perhaps one of his armour-bearers (ch. xviii. 15), remained by the corpse at Joab's command in order to invite Amasa's followers to join Joab. Time was too precious for Joab himself to lose a moment.

He that favoureth Joab, &c.] Lit. *He that delighteth* (ch. xv. 26) *in Joab*. He appeals to their personal attachment to himself as general, and to their loyalty to David; insinuating that Amasa was not faithful to the king, and had met his death justly for his treachery. Joab's real motive in murdering Amasa, as before in the case of Abner, was jealousy.

12. *all the people*] Here and in *v.* 13, the troops which Amasa had been mustering.

14—22. Sheba besieged in Abel-Beth-Maachah.

14. *And he went*] Joab marched rapidly northward, gathering forces as he went.

unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah] Abel was apparently near Beth-Maachah, which is not elsewhere mentioned as a distinct place, and was commonly called Abel-beth-Maachah to distinguish it from other places named Abel (=*meadow*). It was also known as Abel Maim=*meadow of waters* (2 Chr. xvi. 4). It was one of the towns which fell a prey to Benhadad (1 Kings xv. 20), and afterwards to Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 29). The name Maachah may point to some connexion with the Syrian kingdom of that name (ch. x. 6). Its site is supposed to be

gathered together, and went also after him. And they came 15
and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw *it* down. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, 16
Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And when he was come near 17
unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, I *am he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. Then 18
she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they

marked by the village of *Abil*, about twelve miles north of *Lake Huleh*, the ancient Waters of Merom.

all the Berites] If the text is sound, *Berim* or *the Berites* must be the name of a district or people in northern Palestine otherwise unknown to us. But perhaps following the Vulg. and the indications of the Sept. we should read *and all the chosen men were gathered together*.

15. *cast up a bank*] The besiegers erected a mound of earth against the city wall to enable them to batter the upper and weaker part of it. This stood in "the trench" or outwork of the city: a term which includes the low outer wall and the space between it and the main wall. For mention of siege mounds see 2 Kings xix. 32; Is. xxix. 3; Jer. vi. 6; xxxii. 24, xxxiii. 4; Ez. iv. 2, xvii. 17, xxi. 22, xxvi. 8; Dan. xi. 15. They are represented on the bas-reliefs depicting the siege of Lachish which were found at Kouyunjik. Layard's *Monuments of Nineveh*, Vol. II. Pl. 18, 21.

16. *a wise woman*] Cp. ch. xiv. 2.

out of the city] The Sept. reads "from the wall."

18. *They shall surely ask counsel at Abel*] **Let them by all means inquire of Abel.** The phrase is that commonly used for inquiring of God. Cp. ch. xvi. 23. The city had been proverbial for its wisdom from ancient times; men consulted it as an oracle for the settlement of their disputes; a city of such reputation, loyal moreover and peaceable, ought not, she implies, to be thus attacked. Possibly she means further to hint, that if Joab had consulted the inhabitants, as men were wont to do in olden times, and had negotiated for the surrender of Sheba, the siege might have been avoided. This rendering is certainly preferable to that in the margin: *They plainly spake in the beginning, saying, Surely they will ask of Abel, and so make an end:* which means that at the beginning of the siege the inhabitants expected Joab to communicate with the city and offer terms, in accordance with the law which prescribed that a city should be summoned to surrender before it was besieged (Deut. xx. 10 ff.). An ancient Jewish interpretation however explains the passage to refer to that law, for the Targum renders: "Remember now that which is written in the book of the law, to ask

19 ended *the matter.* I *am one of them that are* peaceable *and*
faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a
mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance
20 of the LORD? And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far
21 be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The
matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba
the son of Bichri by name, hath lift up his hand against
the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will
depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab,
Behold, his head *shall be* thrown to thee over the wall.
22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom.
And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and
cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they
retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab
returned *to* Jerusalem unto the king.

a city concerning peace at the first. Hast thou so done, to ask of Abel if they will make peace?" The Sept. rendering may be noted as curious, but is probably derived from a corrupt text and not to be adopted. "It was asked [*conj.* let them ask] in Abel and in Dan whether the customs have failed which the faithful of Israel ordained."

19. *I* am one of them that are *peaceable* and *faithful in Israel*] **I am peaceable and faithful in Israel.** The woman speaks in the name of the city, asserting its peaceableness and loyalty. By an irregularity of construction, hardly reproducible in English, the predicate is in the plural, referring to the inhabitants. Lit. *I am peaceable faithful ones of Israel.*

to destroy a city and a mother] Lit. **to slay**: the personification of the city is kept up. On "mother" as applied to a city (*metropolis*) see note on ch. viii. 1.

the inheritance of the LORD] Cp. ch. x. 12, xiv. 16; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

21. *a man of mount Ephraim*] The name "mount Ephraim," applied to the central mountainous district of Palestine, was extended southwards so as to include part of the territory of Benjamin. See note on 1 Sam. i. 1.

22. *in her wisdom*] The "Preacher" illustrates the truth that "wisdom is better than strength" by a parable strikingly similar to this incident, and possibly suggested by it (Eccl. ix. 13—16).

they retired] **They were dispersed** to their several homes.

23—26. THE OFFICERS OF DAVID'S COURT.

A similar list has already been given in ch. viii. 16—18. There the account of the general administration of the kingdom appropriately follows the summary record of the wars by which that kingdom was established; and the repetition of it here, after David's restoration to

23—26. *The officers of David's court.*

Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah 23
the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the
Pelethites: and Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jeho- 24
shaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder: and Sheva *was* 25
scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests: and Ira 26
also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

Ch. XXI. 1—11. *A Three Years Famine for Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites. The execution of Saul's sons.*

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, 21

the throne, is equally appropriate. Some differences between the lists are explained by their belonging to different periods.

23. *Joab*] Retaining his post in spite of David's resolution to depose him.

the Cherethites] So the *Qrî* and the Sept. and Vulg.: but the *Kthîbh* has *the Cari*, a word found in 2 Kings xi. 4, 19 (E. V. wrongly *captains*), and like *Cherethites* variously explained to mean *executioners*, the body-guard acting in that capacity, or *Carians*, foreign mercenaries employed as a body-guard.

24. *Adoram*] Perhaps the same as *Adoniram* (1 Kings iv. 6, v. 14), who held the office in Solomon's reign, and *Adoram*, who held it at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign (1 Kings xii. 18), but possibly three persons of the same family, who succeeded one another in the office, are meant. The Sept. reads *Adoniram* here.

over the tribute] Better **over the levy** (1 Kings iv. 6 *marg.*, v. 14); superintendent of the forced levies employed in public works. Adoram was stoned to death by the people in the rebellion at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign, as the representative of the hated system of forced labour which had oppressed the people beyond all endurance in Solomon's reign (1 Kings xii. 4). The appearance of this new officer in the closing years of David's reign is most significant of the vast change which had taken place in the character of his rule.

25. *Sheva*] Or *Sheya*, apparently another name for the *Seraiah* of ch. viii. 17.

26. *a chief ruler about David*] **Minister to David.** The post formerly held by David's sons. See on ch. viii. 18.

CHAP. XXI. **1—11.** A THREE YEARS FAMINE FOR SAUL'S MASSACRE OF THE GIBEONITES. THE EXECUTION OF SAUL'S SONS.

1. *Then there was a famine*] Render, **And there was a famine.** There is no adverb of time marking chronological connexion with the foregoing narrative. In Palestine a famine was the almost certain consequence of a failure of the winter rains, on which both cornfields and pasturage depend. See 1 Kings xviii. 2; Joel i. 8—20; for famine as

year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, *It is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody house,
2 because he slew the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of
3 Israel and Judah.) Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make

the result of drought; and cp. Gen. xii. 10, xxvi. 1, xlii. 5; Ruth i. 1; 2 Kings viii. 1, 2.

in the days of David] This famine must have occurred after David became acquainted with Mephibosheth (ch. ix. 1 ff.), for it is expressly stated that he spared Mephibosheth (*v.* 7); and in all probability before Absalom's rebellion, in the account of which we may trace one, if not two allusions to the execution of Saul's sons (ch. xvi. 7, 8, xix. 28); but its date cannot be fixed more exactly, and the phrase *in the days of David* seems designedly indefinite.

For a discussion of some questions connected with the famine and the surrender of Saul's sons for execution see Additional Note II., p. 234.

inquired of the LORD] **Sought the face of Jehovah:** a phrase not found elsewhere in Samuel, and perhaps indicating that this chapter was taken by the compiler from a different source. Cp. Ps. xxiv. 6, xxvii. 8. David sought to ascertain the cause of this judgment; for famine was one of the "four sore judgments" of God (Ezek. xiv. 21; cp. 1 Kings viii. 35—37).

his bloody house] **His blood-guilty house:** upon which rested the guilt of shedding innocent blood. Cp. Ps. v. 6; Ezek. xxii. 2. Unexpiated murder "defiled the land," and involved the nation in punishment. See Num. xxxv. 33, 34; Deut. xxi. 7—9. The Sept. text differs slightly, reading: "Upon Saul and upon his house is blood-guiltiness."

the Gibeonites] On Gibeon see note on ch. ii. 12.

2. *the Amorites*] *Amorites* (=highlanders) is here and elsewhere used as a general designation for the ancient inhabitants of Palestine, particularly those who occupied the mountainous country. See note on 1 Sam. vii. 14. The Gibeonites belonged to the tribe of the Hivites.

had sworn unto them] See Josh. ix. 3 ff. The oath though obtained by fraud was acknowledged to be binding (Josh. ix. 19, 20), and its violation was a breach of the third commandment (Ex. xx. 7).

in his zeal] Probably in a fit of zeal to carry out the Law by cleansing the land from the remnant of the heathen (Ex. xxxiv. 11—16; Deut. vii. 2) as he cleansed it from the soothsayers (1 Sam. xxviii. 3). There is no allusion to the deed elsewhere.

wherewith shall I make the atonement] The cognate substantive—also rendered *satisfaction* (Num. xxxv. 31) and *ransom* (Ex. xxx. 12)—

the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have 4
no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us
shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What you
shall say, *that* will I do for you. And they answered the 5
king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against
us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of
the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered 6
unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah
of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I
will give *them*. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son 7
of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath

means literally *a covering*. The "atonement" is a covering, which hides the offence from the eyes of the offended party, and withdraws the guilt from the gaze of an avenging God.

4. *no silver nor gold*] No money compensation could expiate Saul's offence. Money-compensation for murder is allowed by the laws of most nations in a primitive stage, e.g. of the ancient Germans (Tac. *Germ.* 21); the Anglo-Saxons; and the Arabs of the present day. It was expressly forbidden by the Mosaic Law (Num. xxxv. 31, 32), because a mere money fine is insufficient to enforce strict regard for life, and such a custom may easily be abused by the rich. See Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, p. 207 ff.

neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel] Our cry for vengeance is against the house of Saul, and not against the nation at large.

5. *devised*] This, and not the marginal alternative *cut us off*, is the right rendering.

in any of the coasts] **In all the borders.** *Coast*, from *costa*, a rib or side, originally meant any border or frontier-line, not the sea-line only; and then, like the Lat. *fines*, the territory enclosed by the border.

6. *seven men*] A sacred number, for their execution was to be a solemn religious act of expiation.

we will hang them up] They were to be impaled or crucified, as a public exhibition of the punishment inflicted. In all probability they were put to death first. The practice corresponds to that of hanging a criminal's body in chains on the scene of his crime, which was once common in England.

unto the LORD] For the punishment was demanded by divine justice. Cp. Num. xxv. 4.

in Gibeah] The home of Saul was to be the scene of the punishment.

whom the LORD *did choose*] The exact title, **the chosen of Jehovah**, is nowhere else given to Saul, but is implied by 1 Sam. x. 24. That it should be thus used by his enemies is strange. Was it from a feeling that the fact of his divine election aggravated his guilt?

7. *the* LORD'S *oath*] See 1 Sam. xviii. 3, xx. 12—17, 42, xxiii. 18.

that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the
8 son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the
daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and
Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of
Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai
9 the Meholathite: and he delivered them into the hands of
the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the
LORD: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to
death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the begin-
10 ning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah
took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from
the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out
of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest
on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

8. *the five sons of Michal...whom she brought up for Adriel*] The Heb. text can only mean **whom she bare to Adriel.** But it was *Merab*, not Michal, who was married to Adriel (1 Sam. xviii. 19). Consequently we must either read **Merab** for *Michal*, or take the explanation given in the Targum and adopted by the E.V.: "the five sons of Merab, (whom Michal the daughter of Saul brought up), whom she bare to Adriel."

the Meholathite] Of *Abel-Meholah*, a town in the Jordan valley near Beth-shan, famous as the birth-place of Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16).

9. *in the first* days] Barley harvest preceded wheat harvest, and began about the middle or end of April. Cp. Ex. ix. 31, 32; Ruth i. 22, ii. 23.

10. *spread it*] As a rough tent to shelter her while she watched the corpses. The usage of the word is decisive against understanding it to mean *spread it under her for a bed*, as is done by the Vulg. and most commentators.

dropped upon them] **Was poured upon them** (cp. Ex. ix. 33): that is, until heavy rains shewed that the crime was expiated and the judgment of drought withdrawn. The bodies were left hanging, instead of being taken down on the day of execution (Deut. xxi. 23), until assurance was given that the satisfaction had been accepted. If the rain did not fall until the usual season, Rizpah must have kept her devoted watch for six months, from April to October.

neither the birds...nor the beasts] To become the prey of bird and beast—the certain fate of an unburied corpse—was the depth of ignominy. Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 44, 46. "If an animal falls at night," writes an Eastern traveller, "it is not attacked till daylight, unless by the jackals and hyænas; but if it be slaughtered after sunrise, though the human eye may scan the firmament for a vulture in vain, within five minutes a speck will appear overhead, and wheeling and circling in a rapid downward flight, a huge griffon will pounce on the carcase. In a few minutes a

11—14. *Burial of the bones of Saul and his sons.*

And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, 11
the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and 12
took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son
from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from
the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged
them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa: and he 13
brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of
Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that
were hanged. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son 14
buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the
sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that
the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for
the land.

second and third will dart down; another and another follows—griffons, Egyptian vultures, eagles, kites, buzzards and ravens, till the air is darkened by the crowd. 'Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.'" Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 169.

11—14. Burial of the bones of Saul and his sons.

11. The curious addition of the Sept. to this verse, "and they were unfastened, and Dan the son of Joash, who was of the descendants of the giant, took them down," is almost certainly a corrupt rendering of *vv.* 15, 16, placed here by mistake.

12. *David went*] Touched by Rizpah's maternal devotion, and wishing to shew that he had no personal enmity to the house of Saul.

the men of Jabesh-gilead] The citizens, lit. *lords* or *possessors* of Jabesh-Gilead; a term peculiar to the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel (Josh. xxiv. 11; Jud. ix. 2 ff., xx. 5; 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12). For their bold rescue of the bodies see 1 Sam. xxxi. 11—13. Cp. 2 Sam. ii. 4.

the street] The bodies were hung on the wall (1 Sam. xxxi. 10) in the square or open place just inside the gate, the public meeting-place of all the citizens. Cp. 2 Chr. xxxii. 6; Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16.

Beth-shan] Now *Beisân*, four miles west of the Jordan in the *Wady Jâlûd*. See note on 1 Sam. xxxi. 10.

14. *Jonathan his son*] The Sept. adds, "and the bones of them that were hanged."

Zelah] Enumerated among the towns of Benjamin in Josh. xviii. 28, but not yet identified. *Beit Jala* near Bethlehem, which has been suggested, is not in the tribe of Benjamin.

God was intreated] Accepted the intreaty or intercession thus made on behalf of the land. Cp. ch. xxiv. 25; Gen. xxv. 21; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 13.

15—22. *Heroic exploits in the Philistine wars.*

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel;
and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought
16 against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-
benob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of
whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass *in* weight,
he being girded *with* a new *sword*, thought to have slain
17 David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and
smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of
David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out

15—22. Heroic exploits in the Philistine wars.

This section is quite unconnected with the preceding narrative. It is perhaps a fragment from some "book of golden deeds" recording the exploits of David and his warriors. From such a chronicle may also be derived ch. xxiii. 8—39, possibly ch. v. 17—25, and some other sections of the book.

vv. 18—22 are also preserved in Chronicles, where they are placed immediately after the capture of Rabbah (1 Chr. xx. 4—8).

15. *had yet war again*] "Again" refers to earlier wars, the account of which preceded this narrative in the document from which it was taken.

went down] From the high lands of Judah to the low country of Philistia—the *Shephêlah* or maritime plain.

16. *Ishbi-benob*] Perhaps="dweller on a height," a name given him because he lived in some inaccessible castle. But there are good reasons for suspecting that there is some corruption in the text, and that the giant's real name has been lost.

of the sons of the giant] The word for *sons* is one specially used of the progeny of the giant races of Canaan (Num. xiii. 22, 28; Josh. xv. 14). *Râphâh*, or with the article *ha-Râphâh*, translated "the giant," may be a quasi proper-name for the father of the four giants here mentioned, or, more probably, for the founder of the tribe of *Rephaim*. The Vulg. has *Arapha*, and hence comes *Harapha*, the name of the giant introduced in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

three hundred shekels] About nine pounds: half the weight of Goliath's spear head.

brass] See note on ch. viii. 8.

with a new sword] There is no substantive expressed in the Hebrew: the Vulg. supplies *sword:* others *suit of armour:* the Sept. reads a mace instead of the word *new*, and this suggests the probability that the original reading was some rare word, denoting a specially formidable kind of weapon.

17. *and smote*] Perhaps, and he (David) smote; as *v.* 22 seems to imply that one of them fell by David's own hand.

with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.
And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle 18
with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite
slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant. And there 19
was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where
Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew *the*

that thou quench not the light of Israel] Extinguishing the lamp is a natural metaphor for changing the light of prosperity into the darkness of calamity; and in particular David's sovereignty was the lamp which God's favour had lighted for the well-being of His people. An Arab in misfortune says, "Fate has put out my lamp." Cp. Job xviii. 6; Prov. xiii. 9. The expression *light of Israel* seems to indicate that David was already king of all Israel, and if so, the incident may have happened in one of the wars recorded in ch. v. 17—25.

18. *at Gob*] A place mentioned only here and in *v.* 19. The Sept. reads *Gath*, the parallel passage in Chron. *Gezer;* and we must suppose that *Gob* is either a corruption of the text, or some otherwise unknown place perhaps in the neighbourhood of Gezer, for which see note on ch. v. 25.

Sibbechai the Hushathite] One of David's heroes (1 Chr. xi. 29), general of the eighth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 11). See note on ch. xxiii. 27.

Saph] Written *Sippai* in Chron., where it is added that the Philistines were subdued.

19. *in Gob*] The Sept. reads *Rom* (B) or *Gob* (A), and Chron. omits the name of the place altogether.

where Elhanan, &c.] Lit. *and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, slew Goliath the Gittite.* The words *the brother of* are conjecturally inserted in the E. V. from 1 Chron. They are not found here in the Hebrew text, or in any of the ancient versions. The parallel passage in 1 Chr. xx. 5 reads *and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite.* Now (1) the reading *Jair* is certainly preferable to *Jaare-oregim. Oregim*, the word for *weavers* in the line below, was inserted by a careless scribe, and the Hebrew letters of *Jair* (יעיר) transposed so as to read *Jaare* (יערי). (2) The letters of the words *Beth-lehemite, Goliath*, which stand together in the Heb. text, so closely resemble those of *Lahmi the brother of Goliath*, that it is almost certain that one reading is an accidental corruption of the other. But which is the original it is not easy to decide. There is no difficulty in supposing that another giant, beside the one slain by David, bore the name of Goliath. Another Elhanan of Beth-lehem is mentioned in ch. xxiii. 24.

There is a curious Jewish tradition, preserved in the Targum and by Jerome (*Quaest. Hebr. in libros Regum*), identifying Elhanan with David. The Targum here paraphrases thus: "And David, the son of Jesse the weaver of veils for the sanctuary, who was of Beth-lehem,

brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was*
20 like a weaver's beam. And there was yet a battle in
Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every
hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty
21 *in* number; and he also was born to the giant. And when
he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother
22 of David slew him. These four were born to the giant in
Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his
servants.

slew Goliath the Gittite." But there is no evidence whatever in support of this idea.

the staff of whose spear, &c.] Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 7; 1 Chr. xi. 23. The shaft of his spear, short, but extraordinarily stout and heavy, was popularly compared to the "beam" to which the web is fastened in a loom.

20. *six fingers...six toes*] Pliny mentions such a peculiarity (*Hist. Nat.* xi. 43), and it is not unknown in modern times.

21. *defied Israel*] Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 10, 25, 26.

Jonathan] David's nephew, brother of the astute Jonadab (ch. xiii. 3).

22. *were born to the giant*] Were descendants of *Rapha*, or, *the giant:* not necessarily all four sons of one man. See note on *v.* 16.

Ch. XXII. David's thanksgiving for deliverance from his enemies.

This magnificent hymn is substantially identical with Psalm xviii. The chief variations are pointed out in the notes, and some general remarks on the difference of the two texts will be found in Additional Note III., p. 235.

It was written, as the title indicates, when David's triumphs over his enemies at home and abroad were still recent. Its composition may with much probability be assigned to the period of peace described in ch. vii. 1; but must be placed after Nathan's visit, as *v.* 51 seems clearly to refer to the great promise made through him. The free and joyous tone of the Psalm, and its bold expressions of conscious integrity, also point to the earlier years of David's reign rather than the later, overclouded as these were by the fatal consequences of his sin.

This chapter is the *Haphtarah* or lesson from the prophets appointed to be read in the Synagogue on the Sabbath in conjunction with Deut. xxxii. according to the ritual of the *Sephardim* or Spanish Jews, and also on the seventh day of the Passover.

1. The title.

1. Compare the inscriptions which introduce Moses' songs in the historical narrative (Ex. xv. 1; Deut. xxxi. 30). This inscription seems

CH. XXII. *David's thanksgiving for deliverance from his enemies.*

1. *The title.*

And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song 22
in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the
hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: and 2
he said,

2—4. *Introductory invocation of Jehovah.*

The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
The God of my rock; in him will I trust:
He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high 3
tower, and my refuge,

to have been taken by the compiler of Samuel and the compiler of the Psalter from a common source—probably one of the prophetic histories of David's reign—in which this Psalm was incorporated.

in the day that] i.e. *at the time when*.

out of the hand of Saul] Specially mentioned because Saul was the bitterest and most implacable of his enemies, and because the deliverance from his power raised David to the throne of Israel.

2—4. INTRODUCTORY INVOCATION OF JEHOVAH.

2. *The* LORD *is my rock*] The opening address to God, found in Ps. xviii., "Fervently do I love thee O Jehovah my strength," is wanting here.

2, 3. The imagery, by which David describes so emphatically all that Jehovah had been to him as a Deliverer from his enemies, is derived from the experiences of his warlike life, and particularly of his flight from Saul. The **cliff** (1 Sam. xxiii. 25, 28) where he had escaped from Saul, the **strong-hold** in the wilderness of Judah or the fastnesses of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 19, 29), "the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Sam. xxiv. 2), were all emblems of Him who had been throughout his true Refuge and Deliverer.

3. *The God of my rock*]=my strong God: but it is better to alter the vowel points and read as in the Ps., "my God, my Rock." The title Rock is frequently used to describe the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of God. See Deut. xxxii. 4, 37; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Ps. xxviii. 1, &c.

in him will I trust] Better, **in whom I take refuge**: carrying on the metaphor of a hiding-place in the rocks. Quoted in Heb. ii. 13; cp. Ps. xciv. 22.

my shield] Compare God's promise to Abram (Gen. xv. 1); and Deut. xxxiii. 29.

the horn of my salvation] The Power which saves and delivers me.

My saviour; thou savest me from violence.
4 I will call on the LORD, who is *worthy* to be praised:
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5—7. *The Psalmist's perils. His cry for help.*

5 When the waves of death compassed me,
The floods of ungodly men made me afraid;
6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about;
The snares of death prevented me:
7 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried to my God:
And he did hear my voice out of his temple,
And my cry *did enter* into his ears.

The figure of the horn, as a symbol of victorious strength, is derived from horned animals. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 17; Lk. i. 69.

and my refuge, &c.] The words, "and my **retreat**, my saviour, thou savest me from violence," are omitted in Ps. xviii.

4. *I will call...so shall I be saved*] Better, **I called...and I was saved.** The tenses are frequentative, describing David's *habitual* experience of God's readiness to answer prayer. This verse presents "the theme of the Psalm."

5—7. THE PSALMIST'S PERILS. HIS CRY FOR HELP.

5, 6. For breakers of death had compassed me,
torrents of destruction were affrighting me,
cords of Sheol had surrounded me,
snares of death had encountered me.

The perils to which he had been exposed are described as waves and floods which threatened to engulf him: Sheol and death are represented as laying wait for his life like hunters with nets and snares.

5. *waves*] Ps. xviii. 4 reads *cords* as in *v.* 6; E.V *sorrows*.

ungodly men] Heb. *Belial*. See note on 1 Sam. i. 16. The parallelism points to the meaning *destruction*, physical mischief, instead of the ordinary meaning *wickedness*, moral mischief.

6. *the sorrows of hell*] The word may no doubt mean *pangs*, as it is translated in the Sept. (ὠδῖνες, cp. Acts ii. 24); but is better explained of the **cords** or **nets** of the hunter. *Hell* is *Sheôl* (Gr. *Hades*), the mysterious unseen world, ready to seize and swallow up its victim. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 6.

7. *called...cried*] This rendering represents a difference of words found in the Heb. of Ps. xviii. 6, but not here. It is however supported by the Sept. and is probably the true reading.

out of his temple] The palace temple of heaven, where He sits enthroned. Cp. Ps. xi. 4.

and my cry did enter *into his ears*] In place of the terse expression

8—16. *The manifestation of Jehovah for the discomfiture of David's enemies.*

Then the earth shook and trembled; 8
The foundations of heaven moved
And shook, because he was wroth.

my cry was *in his ears*, Ps. xviii. 6 reads "my cry before him came into his ears."

8—16. The manifestation of Jehovah for the discomfiture of David's enemies.

Earthquake and storm are regarded as the visible manifestations of Divine Power: and therefore God's interposition for the deliverance of His servant from the perils that surrounded him is described as accompanied by terrible phenomena in nature. We have here an ideal description of a Theophany, based on the description of the Theophany at Sinai. See Ex. xix. 16—18; and cp. Ps. lxviii. 8, lxxvii. 16—18; Jud. v. 4, 5. It is not indeed impossible that David refers to some occasion when his enemies were scattered by the breaking of a terrible storm (cp. Josh. x. 11; 1 Sam. vii. 10): but we have no record of such an event having actually happened in his life; and in any case the picture is designed to serve as a description of God's intervention for his deliverance in general, and not upon any single occasion. His power was exerted as really and truly as if all these extraordinary natural phenomena had visibly attested His Advent.

The earthquake (*v.* 8); the distant lightnings (*v.* 9); the gathering darkness of the storm (*vv.* 10—12); the final outburst of its fury (*vv.* 13—16); are pictured in regular succession.

Ps. xxix. may be compared as illustrating David's sense of the grandeur and significance of natural phenomena.

8. *shook and trembled*] The paronomasia of the original may be preserved by translating, **and the earth did shake and quake.**

the foundations of heaven] The mountains on which the vault of heaven seems to rest: cp. "the pillars of heaven" (Job xxvi. 11): or perhaps the universe is regarded as a vast building, without any precise application of the details of the metaphor. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 8. For *heaven* Ps. xviii. 7 reads "the mountains."

9. Smoke arose in his nostril,
and fire from his mouth did devour:
hot coals came burning from him.

The startling boldness of the language will be intelligible if the distinctive character of Hebrew symbolism is borne in mind. It is no "gross anthropomorphism," for the Psalmist did not intend that the mind's eye should clothe his figure in a concrete form. His aim is vividly to express the manifestation of the wrath of God, and he does so in figures which are intended to remain as purely mental conceptions, not to be realised as though God appeared in any visible shape. See some

9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down;
And darkness *was* under his feet.
11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
And he was seen upon the wings of the wind.

excellent remarks in Archbishop Trench's *Comm. on the Epistles to the Seven Churches*, p. 43.

a smoke] The outward sign of the pent-up fires of wrath. So anger is said *to smoke* (Ps. lxxiv. 1, lxxx. 4 *marg.*). This bold figure is suggested by the panting and snorting of an angry animal. Cp. Job xli. 20; in illustration of which Mr Cox quotes from Bertram's *Travels in Carolina:* "I perceived a crocodile rush from a small lake... Thick smoke came with a thundering noise from his nostrils." Martial speaks of *fumantem nasum ursi* "the smoking nostril of an angry bear" (*Epigr.* vi. 64. 28).

fire] Compare again Job's description of Leviathan (xli. 19—21). Fire is the constant emblem of the consuming wrath of God. See Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. xcvii. 3; Heb. xii. 29.

coals] The fiery messengers of vengeance. Cp. Ps. cxl. 10.

10. *He bowed the heavens*] The dark canopy of storm cloud, which is the pavement under His feet (Nah. i. 3), lowers as He descends to judgment. God is said to *come down* when He manifests His power in the world (Gen. xi. 7, xviii. 21; Is. lxiv. 1). *Darkness* symbolizes the mystery and terror of His Advent (Ex. xix. 16, xx. 21; 1 Kings viii. 12; Ps. xcvii. 2).

11. *he rode upon a cherub*] As the Shechinah, or mystic Presence of God in the cloud of glory, rested over the Cherubim which were upon the "Mercy-seat" or covering of the Ark (ch. vi. 2), so in this Theophany God is represented "riding upon a Cherub," as the living throne on which He traverses space.

The Cherubim appear in Scripture (*a*) as the guardians of Paradise (Gen. iii. 24): (*b*) as sculptured or wrought figures in the Tabernacle and Temple (Ex. xxv. 17—20, xxvi. 1, &c.): (*c*) in prophetic visions as the attendants of God (Ezek. x. 1 ff; cp. Ezek. i.; Is. vi.; Rev. iv.). The Cherubim of the Tabernacle and Temple seem to have been winged human figures, representing the angelic attendants who minister in God's Presence: those of Ezekiel's vision appear as composite figures (Ezek. x. 20, 21), symbolical perhaps of all the powers of nature, which wait upon God and fulfil His Will.

was seen] The true reading is that preserved in Ps. xviii. 10, **did fly**, a peculiar word used of the **swooping** of an eagle (Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. xlviii. 40, xlix. 22). The consonants of the two words are so nearly alike (וירא—וידא), that the rarer word would be easily altered

And he made darkness pavilions round about him, 12
Dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies.
Through the brightness before him 13
Were coals of fire kindled.
The LORD thundered from heaven, 14
And the most High uttered his voice.
And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; 15
Lightning, and discomfited them.
And the channels of the sea appeared, 16
The foundations of the world were discovered,
At the rebuking of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

into the more common one. For "the wings of the wind" cp. Ps. civ. 3.

12. More fully in Ps. xviii. 11: "He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him; even darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies." The darkness of the clouds is the tent in which God shrouds His Majesty.

dark waters] So Ps. xviii. 11; but the word here, which is most probably the original reading, means **the gathering of waters.**

13. *Through the brightness*, &c.] **Out of the brightness, &c.** The lightning flashes which now burst through the dense cloud, are as it were rays of the "unapproachable light" in which He dwells. The text of Ps. xviii. 12 is fuller and probably more correct: "Out of the brightness before him there passed through his clouds hailstones and coals of fire."

14. *the most High*] The name of God as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. Cp. Gen. xiv. 18—22; Deut. xxxii. 8.

uttered his voice] Thunder is the voice of God. See Job xxxvii. 2—5. The repetition of "hailstones and coals of fire" in Ps. xviii. 13 is probably due to an error of transcription.

15. *scattered them*] "Them" obviously refers to the enemies whose destruction was the object of this divine interposition (*v.* 4).

discomfited them] A word denoting *the confusion of a sudden panic*, and used specially of *supernatural* defeat. Cp. Ex. xiv. 24 (E. V. *troubled*); Josh. x. 10; Jud. iv. 15; 1 Sam. vii. 10.

16. All nature is pictured as convulsed to its lowest depths; the sea dried up, and the hidden bases of the world laid bare, owning their Lord and Master, as of old at the passage of the Red Sea, when "He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up." See Ex. xv. 8; Ps. civ. 7, cvi. 9; Nah. i. 4. Cp. too Mt. viii. 26.

were discovered] *Discover* in Bible English generally retains its literal meaning 'to uncover,' 'lay bare.'

at the blast, &c.] Cp. *v.* 9.

17—21. *Jehovah's deliverance of his servant for his faithfulness.*

17 He sent from above, he took me;
He drew me out of many waters;
18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.
19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity:
But the LORD was my stay.
20 He brought me forth also into a large place:
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness:

17—21. JEHOVAH'S DELIVERANCE OF HIS SERVANT FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS.

17. *He sent from above*] **He reached forth from on high**: stretched out His hand and caught hold of the sinking man, and drew him out of the floods of calamity which were engulfing him. Cp. *v.* 5; Ps. cxliv. 7.

drew me] A word found elsewhere only in Ex. ii. 10, and suggesting a parallel, as though David would say, 'He drew me out of the great waters of distress, as He drew Moses out of the waters of the Nile, to be the deliverer of His people.'

19. *They prevented me*] **They encountered me**, the same word as in *v.* 6, meaning *to meet with hostile intention. Prevent* is used in a sense which illustrates the transition from the original meaning 'to go before' to the modern meaning 'to hinder.' See the *Bible Word Book*, p. 383. Cp. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vi. 129:

> Half way he met
> His daring foe, at this prevention more
> Incens'd.

my stay] The staff on which he leaned for support. Cp. Ps. xxiii. 4.

20. *into a large place*] The opposite of the *straits* of peril. Cp. *v.* 37; Ps. xxxi. 8.

because he delighted in me] This was the ground of God's deliverance, and it now becomes the leading thought of the Psalm. Cp. ch. xv. 26; Ps. xxii. 8; and also Matt. iii. 17, where the Greek word for "I am well pleased" is the same as that used in the Sept. (εὐδοκεῖν). The reference becomes doubly significant if it is borne in mind that the theocratic king was called God's son (ch. vii. 14; Ps. ii. 7). See Introd. p. 43.

21. *according to my righteousness*] This is no vain-glorious boasting of his own merits, but a testimony to the faithfulness of Jehovah to guard and reward His faithful servants. David does not lay claim to a perfect righteousness, but to sincerity and single-heartedness in his

According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

22—25. *The integrity of David's life and its reward.*

For I have kept the ways of the LORD, 22
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his judgments *were* before me: 23
And *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them.
I was also upright before him, 24
And have kept myself from mine iniquity.
Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to 25
my righteousness;
According to my cleanness in his eye sight.

devotion to God. Compare his own testimony (1 Sam. xxvi. 23), God's testimony (1 Kings xiv. 8), and the testimony of history (1 Kings xi. 4, xv. 5), to his essential integrity.

Is not this conscious rectitude, this "princely heart of innocence," a clear indication that the Psalm was written before his great fall?

the cleanness of my hands]=the purity of my actions. Cp. Ps. xxiv. 4.

22—25. THE INTEGRITY OF DAVID'S LIFE AND ITS REWARD.

22. *For I have kept*, &c.] He goes on to substantiate the assertion of the preceding verse.

23. *all his judgments were before me*] God's commandments were continually present to his mind as the rule of life. Cp. Deut. vi. 6—9; Ps. cxix. 30, 102.

and as for his statutes, &c.] In Ps. xviii. 22, "And his statutes did I not put away from me," in order to sin with less compunction. This suits the parallelism better, and is probably the true reading.

24. *upright*] Or *perfect*, as in *vv.* 31, 33. It expresses the sincerity of undivided devotion. As a sacrificial term it signifies *without blemish*, and so the Sept. renders it here ἄμωμος, for which cp. Eph. i. 4; Col. i. 22, &c.

have kept myself from mine iniquity] I have watched over myself that I might not transgress. Some see further in the words the recognition of an inherent tendency to sin, or an allusion to some special temptation, but the simple explanation is best.

25. The assertion of *v.* 21 is repeated as the conclusion to be drawn from the review of his conduct in *vv.* 22—24, and is confirmed in the following verses by a consideration of the general laws of God's moral government.

26—28. THE LAW OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN.

The truth here enunciated is that God's attitude towards men is regulated by men's attitude towards God (cp. 1 Sam. ii. 30, xv. 23);

26—28. *The law of God's dealings with men.*

26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful,
And with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.
27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
And with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.
28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save:
But thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down.

29—31. *God's faithfulness attested by the Psalmist's experience.*

29 For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD:

not (though this is also true) that men's conceptions of God are the reflection of their own characters.

26. *the merciful*] Or *pious:* the word includes love to God as well as to man. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 9, and cp. Matt. v. 7.

the upright man] Lit. *the upright hero:* the man who is valiant in maintaining his integrity.

27. *with the pure*, &c.] Properly *one who purifies himself.* Cp. 1 John iii. 3; Matt. v. 8; Ps. lxxiii. 1.

thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury] Better, **perverse.** The man who is *froward*, morally distorted and perverse, is given over by God to follow his own perverseness, till it brings him to destruction. Cp. Lev. xxvi. 23, 24; Rom. i. 28; Rev. xxii. 11; and as an illustration, cp. the history of Balaam (Num. xxii. 20).

28. *thine eyes*, &c.] **Thine eyes are against the haughty, whom thou bringest low.** In Ps. xviii. 27 a more usual phrase is found: "haughty eyes dost thou bring low." Cp. Is. ii. 11, 12, 17.

the afflicted people] The Heb. words for *poor* or *afflicted* and for *humble* are closely connected; and as *afflicted* is here contrasted with *haughty*, it may be understood to mean those who through the discipline of suffering have learnt humility. Cp. Luke vi. 20 with Matt. v. 3.

29—31. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS ATTESTED BY THE PSALMIST'S EXPERIENCE.

After celebrating God's goodness in delivering him from all the dangers which threatened his life, David goes on to describe how God had made him victorious over all his enemies.

29. *For thou*, &c.] *For* connects this verse closely with *v.* 29, as the confirmation out of his own experience of the principles there enunciated.

my lamp] Illuminating all his life with the light of prosperity, as the lamp illuminates the house. *Dominus illuminatio mea* was David's motto. Cp. Ps. xxvii. 1, cxxxii. 17. With the different application of

And the LORD will lighten my darkness.
For by thee I have run *through* a troop: 30
By my God have I leaped over a wall.
As for God, his way *is* perfect; 31
The word of the LORD *is* tried:
He *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him.

32—37. *The praise of Jehovah the giver of victory.*

For who *is* God, save the LORD? 32
And who *is* a rock, save our God?
God *is* my strength *and* power: 33
And he maketh my way perfect.
He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet:* 34

the figure in Ps. xviii. 28, "Thou wilt light my lamp," cp. 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4.

30. Two memorable events in David's life seem to be here alluded to: the successful pursuit of the predatory "troop" of Amalekites which had sacked Ziklag (1 Sam. xxx: in *vv.* 8, 15, 23 the same word *troop* is used of the Amalekites): and the capture of Zion, effected with such ease that he seemed to have leapt over the walls which its defenders trusted were impregnable (ch. v. 6—8).

run through] Better, **run after.** The point is the speed of the pursuit, not the completeness of the defeat. This and not the marginal rendering *broken* is preferable.

31. *tried*] i.e. *refined:* like pure gold, with no taint of earthly dross. Cp. Ps. xii. 6, cxix. 140; Prov. xxx. 5.

a buckler, &c.] **A shield to all them that take refuge in him.** Cp. *v.* 3.

32—37. THE PRAISE OF JEHOVAH THE GIVER OF VICTORY.

32. **For who is a strong God (*El*) save Jehovah?**
and who is a rock, save our God (*Elôhîm*)?

Cp. ch. vii. 22; Deut. xxxii. 31; 1 Sam. ii. 2.

El, the name which describes God as *the Mighty One*, is found in Samuel only in 1 Sam. ii. 3; 2 Sam. xxii. 31, 32, 33, 48, xxiii. 5. For the combination of *El* and *Elôhîm* see Gen. xxxiii. 20.

33. *my strength* and *power*] Rather, **my strong fortress.** Ps. xviii. 32 reads "who girdeth me with strength:" cp. *v.* 40.

maketh my way perfect] *Maketh* is a different word from that similarly translated in Ps. xviii. 32, and seems to express *the removal of obstacles* which blocked up the path of his life. Observe the analogy between the perfection of God's way (*v.* 31) and His servant's. Cp. Matt. v. 48. Cp. also Ps. ci. 2, 6.

34. *like hinds' feet*] The hind, like the gazelle, was a type of agility, swiftness, and surefootedness, indispensable qualifications in ancient warfare. Cp. 2 Sam. ii. 18; 1 Chr. xii. 8.

And setteth me upon my high places.
35 He teacheth my hands to war;
So that a bow of steel is broken *by* mine arms.
36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
And thy gentleness hath made me great.
37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me;
So that my feet did not slip.

38—43. *David's destruction of his enemies.*

38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them;
And turned not again until I had consumed them.
39 And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise:
Yea, they are fallen under my feet.
40 For thou hast girded me with strength to battle:

setteth me upon my high places] The metaphor of the hind, bounding unimpeded over the mountain tops, is continued. David's high places are the mountain strongholds, the occupation of which secured him in possession of the country. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 13. Hab. iii. 19 is an obvious imitation of this passage.

35. *so that a bow of steel*, &c.] **And mine arms bend a bow of bronze.** The ability to bend a *metal* bow (cp. Job xx. 24) was a mark of superior strength. Readers of the Odyssey will recall Ulysses' bow, which none but himself could bend. (Hom. *Od.* xxi. 409).

Observe how David recognises that the advantages of physical strength and energy, important qualifications in times when the king was himself the leader of his people in battle, were gifts of God; yet that it was not these that saved him and made him victorious, but Jehovah's care and help (*vv.* 36 ff.).

36. *the shield of thy salvation*] Cp. Eph. vi. 17. Ps. xviii. 35 adds, "and thy right hand sustained me."

thy gentleness] This is a rendering of the word used in Ps. xviii. 35, which means *gentleness* or *condescension:* but the reading here is different, and probably means **thy answering,** i.e. thy answers to my prayers for help.

37. *enlarged my steps*, &c.] Given me free space for unobstructed motion (cp. *v.* 20; Prov. iv. 12), and the power to advance with firm, unwavering steps.

38—43. DAVID'S DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES.

38. *destroyed them*] In Ps. xviii. 37, "overtaken them," an echo of Ex. xv. 9.

39. *And I have consumed them, and wounded them*] **Yea I consumed them**—omitted in Ps. xviii. 38—**and crushed them.**

Them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.
Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, 41
That I might destroy them that hate me.
They looked, but *there was* none to save; 42
Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
Then did I beat them *as* small as the dust of the earth, 43
I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did spread them abroad.

44—46. *The establishment of David's dominion.*

Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, 44
Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen:
A people *which* I knew not shall serve me.

41. And mine enemies didst thou make to turn
their backs unto me:
as for them that hate me, I destroyed them.

The first clause means that his enemies were put to flight (Ex. xxiii. 27), not (as the E. V. suggests) that he planted his foot on their necks in token of triumph (Josh. x. 24).

42. *They looked*] They looked for help. Cp. Is. xvii. 7, 8. The Sept. and Ps. xviii. 41 read, *they cried*. There is only the difference of a single letter between the words, as far as the consonants are concerned (ישועו—ישעו).

even unto the LORD] In their extremity even the heathen might cry for mercy to the "unknown God" of their enemies. Cp. 1 Sam. v. 12; Jonah iii. 7 ff.

43. *as the dust of the earth*] In Ps. xviii. 42, "as the dust before the wind." For the metaphor cp. 2 Kings xiii. 7.

I did stamp them, &c.] In Ps. xviii. 42, "as the mire of the streets did I empty them out:" I flung them away as worthless refuse. Again the variation is due to the confusion of similar words (אריקם—אדקם).

44—46. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DAVID'S DOMINION.

44. *from the strivings of my people*] The reference seems to be to the civil wars and internal dissensions which had disturbed the early years of David's reign, while Saul's house still endeavoured to maintain its position. Through all these conflicts he had been safely brought, and preserved to exercise dominion over the heathen nations round. Cp. ch. viii. 1—14; Ps. ii. 8.

shall serve me] **Served me.** There is no reason for the sudden transition of the E. V. to the future here and in *vv.* 45, 46. David is still recounting his past victories, with special reference in all probability

45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me:
As soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.
46 Strangers shall fade away,
And they shall be afraid out of their close places.

47—51. *Concluding thanksgiving and doxology.*

47 The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;
And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.
48 *It is* God that avengeth me,
And that bringeth down the people under me,

to the subjugation of the Syrians, whom he might well describe as "a people he knew not." Cp. ch. viii. 6, x. 19.

45. *shall submit themselves unto me*] **Submitted themselves unto me.** The marginal rendering, *yield feigned obedience*, gives the original meaning of the word, which according to its derivation seems to denote the unwilling homage extorted from the vanquished by their conqueror. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. lxvi. 3, lxxxi. 15.

as soon as they hear, &c.] At the mere rumour of David's victories they offer their allegiance, as for example Toi king of Hamath did (ch. viii. 9 ff.).

In Ps. xviii. 44 the order of the clauses is inverted.

46. *shall fade away*] **Faded away**: like plants scorched up by the burning sun. Cp. Ex. xviii. 18 (*marg.*).

shall be afraid] Probably, **came limping out of their fastnesses**: a picture of the exhausted defenders of a fort dragging themselves along with difficulty and reluctance to lay down their arms before their conqueror. But the word may also be explained according to the slightly different reading of Ps. xviii. 45, **came trembling out of their fastnesses**, terrified into surrendering at discretion to the triumphant invader. Cp. Mic. vii. 17; 1 Sam. xiv. 11.

47—51. CONCLUDING THANKSGIVING AND DOXOLOGY.

47. *The* LORD *liveth*] Life is the essential attribute of Jehovah, Who is the Living God in contrast to the dead idols of the heathen. The experience of David's life was to him a certain proof that God is the living, acting Ruler of the World. Cp. Josh. iii. 10.

the God of the rock of my salvation] God who is strong and faithful to work out deliverance for me. Cp. *v.* 3. Ps. xviii. 46 has merely "the God of my salvation."

48. *avengeth me*] For the wrongs inflicted by Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 12); for the insults of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 39); for the opposition of those who refused to acknowledge him as king (ch. iv. 8). Vengeance is the prerogative of God (Ps. xciv. 1), and the visible execution of it was anxiously looked for as His vindication of the righteousness and innocence of His servants.

bringeth down the people under me] The reference seems to be, as in

And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: 49
Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me:
Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, 50
among the heathen,
And I will sing praises unto thy name.
He is the tower of salvation for his king: 51
And sheweth mercy to his anointed,
Unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

CH. XXIII. 1—7. *The last words of David.*

Now these *be* the last words of David. 23

v. 44, to his success in overcoming internal opposition to his rule. It is not the boast of a triumphant despot, but the thanksgiving of a ruler who recognised the vital importance of union for the prosperity of Israel, and the extreme difficulty of reconciling all the discordant elements in the nation, and knew that it was a task beyond his unaided powers. Cp. Ps. cxliv. 2. The Sept. reads "disciplineth."

49. *bringeth me forth*] The opposite of "shutting him up into the hand of his enemies" (Ps. xxxi. 8). Cp. *vv.* 20, 37.

the violent man] This may mean men of violence in general, but as Saul is named in the title, it is natural to see a definite reference to him in particular. Cp. Ps. cxl. 1, 4, 11.

50. The celebration of Jehovah's faithfulness to His servant is not to be confined within the narrow limits of Israel. His praise is to be proclaimed among the heathen, who, as they are brought under the dominion of His people, may also be brought to the knowledge of Jehovah. Cp. Ps. xcvi. 3, 10. This verse is quoted by St Paul in Rom. xv. 9 (along with Deut. xxxii. 43; Ps. cxvii. 1; Is. xi. 10), to prove that the Old Testament anticipated the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of salvation.

51. *He is the tower of salvation*] So the *Qrî:* cp. Ps. lxi. 3; Prov. xviii. 10: but the *Kthîbh*, the Versions, and Ps. xviii. 50 read, **Who giveth great deliverance.** The difference between the consonants of the words in the original is very trifling (מגדיל–מגדול).

to his seed for evermore] A reference to the promise in ch. vii. 12—16, claiming the continued favour of God for his posterity. See notes there.

CH. XXIII. 1—7. THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID.

The great hymn of triumph in ch. xxii., composed when David was in the zenith of his prosperity, is followed by his "last words:" his last prophetic utterance, delivered not long before his death, a parting testi-

David the son of Jesse said,
And the man *who* was raised up on high,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,
2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me,
And his word *was* in my tongue.
3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men *must be* just,
Ruling *in* the fear of God.
4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth,
Even a morning without clouds;

mony to the world of his confidence in the fulfilment of the promise concerning the eternal dominion of his posterity.

A translation of the Targum or Aramaic paraphrase of David's last words is given in Note IV., p. 237.

1. *David the son of Jesse said*] **The oracle of David the son of Jesse**: a peculiar word, generally used of a direct message from God through a prophet in the phrase rendered, "saith the LORD," and joined with the name of the human speaker only here and in Num. xxiv. 3, 4, 15, 16; Prov. xxx. 1. It therefore marks these "last words" as an utterance delivered by special divine inspiration.

raised up on high] Raised by God from a low estate to be the king of Israel. Cp. ch. vii. 8, 9; Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71.

the God of Jacob] The use of the name *Jacob*, instead of the more familiar *Israel*, is chiefly poetical. It suggests more vividly the connexion of the nation with their great ancestor, and recalls more forcibly the covenant made with him by God. Cp. Ps. xx. 1; Is. ii. 3.

the sweet psalmist of Israel] Lit. *pleasant in Israel's songs of praise:* a title deserving to stand by the side of "the anointed of the God of Jacob," because he was God's instrument for educating and developing his people's religious life by means of his Psalms, not less than for governing them as king. See Introd. ch. v. § 6, *c*, p. 31.

2. *the Spirit of the* LORD] A direct claim of inspiration, to which Christ Himself bears witness (Matt. xxii. 43).

Observe the *parallelisms*, which constitute Hebrew poetry.

3, 4. The oracular brevity of these verses hardly admits of translation, and makes the meaning of them obscure. They may be rendered:

A ruler over men, a righteous one!
a ruler in the fear of God!
and he shall be as the light of morning when the sun riseth;
a morning without clouds;
when from sunshine, from rain, grass springeth from earth.

As the tender grass *springing* out of the earth
By clear shining after rain.
Although my house *be* not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things*, and sure:

The second half of *v.* 3 draws, with a few strong strokes—there are but six words in the original—an outline portrait of an ideal king, ruling with perfect justice, controlled and guided by the fear of God. *v.* 4 depicts in figurative language the blessings of his reign.

His appearance will be like the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning; blessings will follow him as verdure clothes the earth from the united influences of sunshine and rain.

In order to appreciate the force of the latter figure, it must be borne in mind that verdure is not perpetual in Palestine, as with us. There what in June is "a brown, hard-baked, gaping plain, with only here and there the withered stems of thistles and centaureas to tell that life had ever existed there" is clothed in spring after the rains with "a deep solid growth of clovers and grasses." David had been familiar with the yearly transformation of the dry and dusty downs of Beth-lehem into a lovely garden of brilliant flowers; an apt emblem of the gracious influences of the perfect rule of an ideal king upon a hard and desert world. Cp. Is. xxxii. 15, xxxv. 1, 2. See Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 454.

This prophecy is the companion and complement of the prophecy in ch. vii. There the promise of an eternal dominion is given to the house of David, finding a partial fulfilment in his descendants, and a complete fulfilment only in Christ: here David himself is taught by inspiration to draw the portrait of a ruler, some features of which were partially realised in Solomon and the better kings of Judah, but which finds it perfect realisation only in Christ.

The features of the portrait are developed and the outlines filled in by subsequent prophets, with ever increasing clearness pointing forward to Him Who was to fulfil and more than fulfil all the anticipations of prophecy.

Thus for the *ruler* cp. Micah v. 2: for the characteristic of *righteousness* cp. Ps. lxxii. 1—3 (primarily referring to Solomon); Is. xi. 1—5: Zech. ix. 9: and especially Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15: for the *fear of the* LORD, cp. Is. xi. 2. The figure of the fertilising rain is borrowed in Ps. lxxii. 6: cp. Is. xliv. 3, 4: that of the light is repeated in Prov. iv. 18: and the closing words of the last prophet, "Unto you shall the Sun of righteousness arise" (Mal. iv. 2), combine and re-echo these last words of David.

5. For is not my house thus with God?
for an eternal covenant hath he made for me,
ordered in all and secured:
for all my salvation and all good pleasure
shall he not cause it to spring forth?

For *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire,
Although he make *it* not to grow.
6 But *the sons of* Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands:
7 But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced *with* iron and the staff of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place.

This seems to be the most probable rendering of an obscure passage. The meaning then will be: Is not my house in such a relation to God, because He has made an eternal covenant with me, that I may look for the righteous ruler to arise out of it, bringing with him all these attendant blessings?

"The eternal covenant" is the promise in ch. vii. 12 ff., to which David refers as the ground of his confidence in the fulfilment of this prophecy in and through his house. The epithets "ordered in all and secured" compare the covenant to a carefully drawn and properly attested legal document.

Finally he expresses his confidence that God will in due time cause the salvation promised to him and his house, and all His own good pleasure, to grow and prosper, using a metaphor suggested by that in *v.* 4. Cp. Ps. cxxxii. 17; Jer. xxxiii. 15; and for God's "good pleasure," cp. Is. liii. 10.

6. *But* the sons of *Belial*] **But the wicked**, &c. All ungodly men and evil things are described as **worthlessness** or **wickedness**. Their judgment and destruction is the necessary consequence of the perfect rule of the righteous king. Cp. Matt. xiii. 41.

7. *But the man*, &c.] **But the man who toucheth them must arm himself with iron and a spear shaft.** The thorns cannot be touched by hand, but must be torn up with an iron hook fastened to a long handle. The expression is chosen so as to be applicable to the enemies who are figured, as well as to the thorns which figure them.

burnt with fire] Cp. Matt. iii. 10, xiii. 30; Lk. xix. 27; Heb. vi. 8.

in the same *place*] Or perhaps, *until they are consumed.* But the word is probably not part of the true text, and should be omitted altogether.

8—39. David's Heroes and their exploits. = 1 Chr. xi. 11—41.

This section is placed in Chronicles after the account of David's election as King of Israel and his capture of Zion, and is prefaced by the heading: "These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who shewed themselves strong with him in his kingdom with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning

8—39. *David's Heroes and their exploits.*

8—12. *The first Three.*

These *be* the names of the mighty *men* whom David had: 8
The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. And 9
after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty *men* with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and

Israel." The list therefore belongs, at any rate in substance, to the earlier part of David's reign.

8—12. THE FIRST THREE.

8. *the mighty men*] Used here in a narrower sense, not of the whole body-guard of six hundred. See note on ch. xv. 18.

The Tachmonite that sat in the seat] The text is corrupt, and we must follow 1 Chr. xi. 11 in reading **Jashobeam the Hachmonite**. He joined David at Ziklag (1 Chr. xii. 6), and was afterwards made general of the first division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 2). Jehiel, the tutor of the king's sons, belonged to the same family (1 Chr. xxvii. 32).

chief among the captains] The word translated *captains* probably means **aides-de-camp**, or personal attendants on the king. See 1 Kings ix. 22 (E.V. captains); 2 Kings vii. 2, 17, 19 (E.V. lord), ix. 25, x. 25, xv. 25. But it is possible that we should alter the text slightly, and read *chief of the three* (Vulg., E.V., *marg.*). Cp. *v.* 23. In fact all through this section there is a constant confusion between the words for *captain* or *aide-de-camp*, *three*, and *thirty*, which are all closely similar in the Heb.

the same was *Adino the Eznite*] These words are probably a corruption of some words equivalent to those in 1 Chr. xi. 11, which are needed to complete the sense here: **he brandished his spear.** The Sept. reads "Adinon the Asonæan, he drew his sword."

eight hundred] Chr. reads *three hundred*, perhaps by confusion with *v.* 18. There is no ground for supposing that two different occasions are referred to.

slew at one time] With the help perhaps of some of his men. Yet cp. Jud. iii. 31, xv. 15.

9. *Dodo*] The *Khthbh* may be read *Dodai*, as the name is given in 1 Chr. xxvii. 4, where we learn that Dodai, as next in rank to Jashobeam, was general of the second division of the army.

the Ahohite] A patronymic derived from Ahoah, the son of Benjamin's eldest son Bela (1 Chron. viii. 4). Perhaps Dodo, like Jashobeam, was one of the Benjamites who joined David at Ziklag (1 Chron. xii. 1, 2).

that *were there gathered together*] *There* implies the previous mention of the name of some place, and certain anomalies of construction also indi-

10 the men of Israel were gone away: he arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that
11 day; and the people returned after him only to spoil. And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full *of* lentiles: and the people fled from
12 the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

13—17. *The water of the well at Beth-lehem.*

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to

cate that the text is defective. 1 Chr. xi. 13 reads: "Eleazar...one of the three mighty men. He was with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle." Pas-dammim, or Ephes-dammim, where David slew Goliath, was in the valley of Elah, between Shochoh and Azekah. The name, signifying "boundary of blood," was probably due to its being the scene of frequent skirmishes with the Philistines. See 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

were gone away] Rather, **went up** to battle. The words "and the people fled from before the Philistines," which appear to correspond to this in 1 Chr. xi. 13, really belong to Shammah's exploit (*v.* 11). Several lines have been lost from the text there.

10. *his hand clave unto the sword*] At the close of the massacre of the Christians of Mount Lebanon by the Druses, in 1860, Sheikh Ali Amad's hand so clave to the handle of his sword that he could not open it until the muscles were relaxed by fomentation of hot water. Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, II. p. 679.

wrought a great victory] Lit. *wrought a great deliverance* or *salvation*. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 13, xix. 5.

returned after him] **Were turning after him**, were following him: not necessarily implying that they had fled previously.

11. *into a troop*] Probably the consonants should be read with different vowels **to Lehi**, the scene of Samson's victory over the Philistines (Jud. xv. 9, 14, 19).

lentiles] Chr. reads *barley*. The two words might easily be confused in Hebrew. The Philistines came up to carry off the ripe crops. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 1.

13—17. THE WATER OF THE WELL AT BETH-LEHEM.

13. *three of the thirty chief*] Not the three mentioned before, but in all probability Abishai, Benaiah, and a third not named, who were promoted from the "Thirty" to form a second triad as a reward for this feat of valour.

David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David *was* then in a hold, and the garrison 14
of the Philistines *was* then *in* Beth-lehem. And David 15
longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink *of* the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate. And 16
the three mighty *men* brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, 17

in the harvest time] The preposition does not mean *in*, and the reading of 1 Chr. xi. 15 *to the rock* is perhaps the true one.

the cave of Adullam] David's old haunt in the valley of Elah. See note on 1 Sam. xxii. 1.

the valley of Rephaim] See note on ch. v. 18. The mention of the "hold" and this valley together in both narratives makes it not improbable that the exploit of the three heroes occurred in the invasion related in ch. v. 17 ff.

14. *in a hold*] **In the strong-hold**, probably the same as that mentioned in ch. v. 17, where see note. The ruins bearing the name *Aid el Ma*, which is supposed to be a corruption of *Adullam*, lie at the foot of a high rounded hill almost isolated by subordinate valleys. This forms a natural fortress, and may have been "the rock" which was the site of David's stronghold; while numerous caves, still used for habitations, are found in the neighbouring valleys.

the garrison of the Philistines] The same term is used of the military posts of the Philistines in Israelite territory in 1 Sam. xiii. 23, xiv. 1 ff; and a similar word in 1 Sam. x. 5, xiii. 3.

15. *the well of Beth-lehem*] The traditional "David's well" is half a mile N.N.E. of Beth-lehem. Ritter (*Geogr. of Pal.* III. 340) speaks of its "deep shaft and clear cool water;" but it is too far from the town to be described as "at the gate."

16. *brake through the host of the Philistines*] A striking proof of the enthusiasm which David inspired in his followers, and a noble instance of the true spirit of chivalry, which fears no danger and shrinks from no self-sacrifice, in order to do the smallest service for the object of its devotion; the spirit which is perfected in the highest example of love (John xv. 13).

poured it out unto the LORD] The sacrificial term for pouring out a drink-offering or libation (Gen. xxxv. 14, &c.). "That which had been won by the lives of those three gallant chiefs was too sacred for him to drink, but it was on that very account deemed by him as worthy to be consecrated in sacrifice to God, as any of the prescribed offerings of the Levitical ritual. Pure Chivalry and pure Religion there formed an absolute union." Stanley's *Lect.* II. 54.

that I should do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in *jeopardy of* their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These *things* did *these* three mighty *men*.

18—23. *Exploits of Abishai and Benaiah.*

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, *was* chief among three. And he lift up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among
19 three. Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto
20 the *first* three. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lion-like men of Moab: he went

17. is not this *the blood*] As the text stands, the sentence is simply an interrogative exclamation: *The blood of the men...?* But Sept., Vulg. and Chron. read: *Shall I drink the blood...?* The water fetched at the risk of his comrades' lives seemed to him the very blood in which the life resides (Lev. xvii. 10, 11).

18—23. Exploits of Abishai and Benaiah.

18. *Abishai*] David's valiant but hard-hearted nephew, who shared the command of the army with his brother Joab in the Ammonite war and in Absalom's rebellion (ch. x. 10, 14, xviii. 2). The characteristic trait of his nature was a blunt impetuous ferocity. See 1 Sam. xxvi. 8; 2 Sam. xvi. 9, xix. 21.

chief among three] The *Qrî* reads **chief of the three**; those namely who were mentioned in *v.* 17. But the *Kthîbh* has *chief of the aides-de-camp*, as in *v.* 8.

among three] As before, **among the three.**

20. *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*] Commander of the body-guard (ch. viii. 18, xx. 23), and general of the third division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 5, 6). He was an active supporter of Solomon against Adonijah, and was rewarded by being made commander-in-chief in place of Joab. See 1 Kings i. 8, 26, 32 ff., ii. 25—35, 46, iv. 4. His father Jehoiada was "the chief priest" (1 Chr. xxvii. 5), that is, probably, the high priest's deputy, and leader of the "Aaronites," i.e. priests, who joined David at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 27).

the son of a valiant man] Better, **a valiant man.**

Kabzeel] A town in the extreme south of Judah towards the border of Edom (Josh. xv. 21), reoccupied after the Captivity and called *Jekabzeel*. Its exact site is unknown.

two lion-like men of Moab] **Ariel**, translated *lion-like man*, means *lion of God*, a title applied by the Arabs and Persians to celebrated warriors. The Sept. reads "the two sons of Ariel," and it has been conjectured that *Ariel* was a title of the Moabite king; but 1 Chr. xi. 22 supports the

down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the 21
Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. These *things* did 22
Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty *men*. He was more honourable than the thirty, 23
but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

24—39. *The Thirty Heroes.*

Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan 24

reading of the Heb. text. The exploit may have been an incident in the Moabite war recorded in ch. viii. 2.

a lion, &c.] The lion had probably been driven by the severity of the winter into the neighbourhood of some village, to the terror of the inhabitants.

21. *a goodly man*] Lit. *a man of appearance*, a notable man; which is explained in 1 Chr. xi. 23 to mean "a man of great stature," with the addition, "five cubits high."

a spear] The Sept. adds, *like the beam of a bridge* (or, *of a ladder*): Chron. *like a weaver's beam*, as in ch. xxi. 19.

with a staff] Cp. (though the word is different) 1 Sam. xvii. 40, 43.

22. *among three mighty men*] **Among the three mighty men** of the second rank.

23. *set him over his guard*] **Made him a member of his privy council**: lit. *appointed him to his audience*. Cp. 1 Sam. xxii. 14 (note). If, as seems not improbable, *Jehoiada the son of Benaiah* in 1 Chr. xxvii. 34 is a textual error for *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*, we have another reference to his tenure of this office, which was distinct from that of commander of the body guard (ch. viii. 18, xx. 23).

24—39. The Thirty Heroes.

The names in this list vary considerably from those in the corresponding list in 1 Chron. xi. 26—41. In all probability both lists have suffered considerably from textual corruption, by which names are especially liable to be affected, and many of the differences can clearly be traced to this source. But it cannot be assumed as absolutely certain that the lists were originally identical. This catalogue may possibly have been revised at a later period of David's reign, when the body was to some extent differently constituted.

The heroes are for the most part distinguished by the names of their native places or residences; and these are in some cases identical with clan or family names, because the head of the clan gave his name to the place where his family settled.

24. The list in Chron. is headed "And the mighty men of valour were Asahel," &c.

25 the son of Dodo *of* Beth-lehem, Shammah the Harodite,
26 Elika the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh
27 the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hu-
28 shathite, Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,

Asahel] David's nephew. See note on ch. ii. 18.

Elhanan] Apparently not the same as Elhanan the son of Jair of Beth-lehem (ch. xxi. 19), if the text is sound.

25. *Shammah the Harodite*] Of Harod, perhaps the place mentioned in Jud. vii. 1, which may be either *Ain Jâlûd* near Jezreel, or *Ain el Jemmaîn* near Beth-shan. He is probably to be identified with *Shamhuth the Izrahite*, general of the fifth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 8), *Izrahite* being his family name.

Elika] Omitted in Chr., probably by accident, owing to the repetition of *Harodite*.

26. *Helez the Paltite*] Generally explained to mean *of Beth-pelet*, an unidentified town in the extreme south of Judah, named in the same group with Beer-sheba (Josh. xv. 27). But this seems questionable, as he is called an *Ephraimite* in 1 Chr. xxvii. 10. 1 Chron. twice reads *Pelonite* (xi. 27, xxvii. 10), but there is no known place or family from which such a name could be formed, and it is either a corruption, or the Hebrew word meaning *of so and so*, inserted by a scribe who could not read the original word in the text which he was copying. Helez was general of the seventh division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 10).

Ira...the Tekoite] Of Tekoa, see note on ch. xiv. 2. He was general of the sixth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 9), and a different person from David's minister (ch. xx. 26).

27. *Abiezer the Anethothite*] Of Anathoth in Benjamin. The modern village of *Anâta*, three miles N.N.E. of Jerusalem, preserves the name and marks the site. It was a priests' city (Josh. xxi. 18); the home of Abiathar (1 Kings ii. 26); and the birth-place of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. i. 1). *Antothite* (1 Chr. xi. 28), and *Anetothite* (1 Chr. xxvii. 12), are merely different transliterations of the same Heb. word. In the latter passage Abiezer is named as the general of the ninth division of the army.

Mebunnai the Hushathite] *Mebunnai* (מבני) is doubtless a textual error for *Sibbechai* (סבכי), the consonants being very similar and easily confused in the original text, which had no vowels. **Sibbechai** won renown by slaying the giant Saph (ch. xxi. 18), and commanded the eighth division of the army (1 Chr. xxvii. 11). His native place *Hushah* must have been in Judah, as it is mentioned among the places occupied by the descendants of Judah (1 Chr. iv. 4), but nothing further is known about it. He belonged to the important clan of the Zarhites, descended from Zerah the son of Judah (1 Chr. ii. 4).

28. *Zalmon the Ahohite*] Chron. has *Ilai*. Whether the difference is original, or due to corruption of the text, it is impossible to decide. On *Ahohite* see *v.* 9.

Maharai the Netophathite] Of Netophah, perhaps the modern *Umm Toba*, three miles N.E. of Beth-lehem, a place inhabited by Levites

Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son 29
of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, Benaiah 30
the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash, Abi-albon 31
the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, Eliahba the Shaal- 32
bonite, *of* the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, Shammah the 33

(1 Chr. ix. 16), and mentioned in the accounts of the Return from the Captivity (Ezra ii. 22; Neh. vii. 26). Maharai commanded the tenth division of the army, and, like Sibbechai, was a Zarhite.

29. *Heleb*] Or *Heled* (1 Chr. xi. 30), or *Heldai* (1 Chr. xxvii. 15), of the house of Othniel, commander of the twelfth division.

Ittai] *Ithai* in Chron. is merely a different way of pronouncing the same name. He must of course be distinguished from Ittai the Gittite.

30. *Benaiah the Pirathonite*] Of Pirathon in Ephraim (Jud. xii. 13, 15), perhaps the modern *Ferâta*, six miles W.S.W. of Shechem. Benaiah was general of the eleventh division (1 Chr. xxvii. 14).

Hiddai] In 1 Chr. xi. 32 *Hurai*, owing to the common confusion of *d* and *r*.

the brooks of Gaash] Or **Nahale-Gaash**, a proper name meaning *the ravines of the earthquake*. "The hill of Gaash" was on the south of Joshua's property at Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim (Josh. xix. 50, xxiv. 30; Jud. ii. 9), the traditional site of which is *Kefr Hâris*, nine miles S.W. of Shechem. But no trace of the name *Gaash* has yet been discovered.

31. *Abi-albon the Arbathite*] Called in 1 Chr. xi. 32 *Abiel*, which is probably the true reading, as *Abi-albon* is an unknown name, and may easily have arisen from confusion with *Shaalbonite* in the line below. For a similar confusion cp. ch. xxi. 19. He was a native of Arabah or Beth-arabah, a town in the wilderness of Judah, on the border between Judah and Benjamin (Josh. xv. 6, 61, xviii. 18, 22).

the Barhumite] Of Bahurim: see note on ch. iii. 16: a corruption or transposition for *Baharumite*, which is found in 1 Chr. xi. 33.

32. *the Shaalbonite*] of Shaalabbin in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 42; Jud. i. 35; 1 Kings iv. 9); perhaps the modern *Selbît*, 3 miles N. W. of *Yâlo* (Aijalon), and about 15 miles W. N. W. of Jerusalem.

of *the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, Shammah the Hararite*] *Of* is not in the Heb. text; Chron. reads "the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite." The word *bnê* (=sons) seems quite out of place, and must either be omitted as an erroneous repetition of the last three letters of the preceding word, or regarded as a part of the hero's name. The name of his native place must also be inserted from Chron. Thus we get *Jashen* (Chron. *Hashem*), or *Bnejashen* (Chron. *Bnehashem*) *the Gizonite* as the probable reading.

33. *Shammah the Hararite*] Shammah has already been mentioned in *v.* 11 as one of the first Three, so that his name is evidently out of place among the Thirty. A comparison of the text of 1 Chron. xi. 34 makes it tolerably certain that we should read either *Jonathan the son of Agee the Hararite*, or *Jonathan the son of Shammah the Hararite*, making Jonathan either brother or son of the hero mentioned in *v.* 11.

34 Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, Eliphelet
the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the
35 son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai
36 the Arbite, Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the
37 Gadite, Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour-
38 bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an
39 Ithrite, Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven *in* all.

Sharar] In Chron. *Sacar*, a name found also in 1 Chr. xxvi. 4.

34. Here the text of 1 Chr. xi. 35, 36 diverges widely, and in place of the names in this verse reads "Eliphal the son of Ur, Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite."

the son of the Maachathite] Better, **the Maachathite**, a member of the clan or family of Maachah, settled at Abel-beth-Maachah (ch. xx. 14 ff.); or possibly a native of the Syrian kingdom of Maachah (ch. x. 6).

Eliam] Son of David's clever but treacherous counsellor (ch. xv. 12); supposed by some to be the father of Bath-sheba. But the identification is doubtful: see note on ch. xi. 3.

35. *Hezrai the Carmelite*] The *Kthîbh* agrees with 1 Chr. xi. 37 in reading *Hezro*. He belonged to Carmel in the mountainous country of Judah, now *Kurmul*, about seven miles S. S.E. of Hebron. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

Paarai the Arbite] Of Arab, a city also in the neighbourhood of Hebron (Josh. xv. 52), perhaps *er-Rabîyeh*, about five miles S. of Hebron. Chron. reads "Naarai the son of Ezbai."

36. *Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah*] In Chron. "Joel, the brother of Nathan." The consonants of *Igal* (יגאל) and *Joel* (יואל) are so similar that one or other of the names is probably corrupt. *Igal* occurs in Num. xiii. 7; 1 Chr. iii. 22. If the text is correct he was a Syrian of Zobah. See note on ch. viii. 3.

Bani the Gadite] This is probably the true reading, and *Mibhar the son of Haggeri* in 1 Chr. xi. 38 is a corruption of the words here *of Zobah Bani the Gadite*.

37. *Zelek the Ammonite*] Like Igal the Syrian, and Ittai the Philistine, a foreigner who rose to distinction in David's service.

Naharai the Beerothite] Of Beeroth (see note on ch. iv. 2), and therefore perhaps a Gibeonite by race.

armourbearer] The *Kthîbh* has the plural *armourbearers*, but the singular is supported by the Sept. and Chron., and is probably the correct reading. Joab had ten armourbearers or attendant squires (ch. xviii. 15).

38. *Ithrite*] Belonging to the family of Jether, which settled at Kirjath-jearim (1 Chr. ii. 53).

39. *Uriah*] See on ch. xi. 3.

thirty and seven in all] This total is obtained either (*a*) by reckoning *three* in the first class (*vv.* 8—12), *two* in the second (*vv.* 18—23), and *thirty-two* in the third (*vv.* 24—39), emending *v.* 34 by the help of Chron. so as to contain three names: or (*b*) if the text of *v.* 34 is

Ch. XXIV. *The numbering of the People and the Plague.*

1—9. *The Numbering of the People.*

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against 24
Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go,

retained, by counting *three* in the second class, though only two are mentioned by name. Joab, as commander-in-chief, is not reckoned in the total.

In 1 Chr. xi. 41—47 sixteen additional names are given, possibly either of those who became members of the body when its number was not rigidly limited to thirty, or of those who took the places vacated by death.

Ch. XXIV. The numbering of the People and the Plague. = 1 Chr. xxi. 1—27.

There is no definite note of time to shew when the events here recorded took place, but several indications point to the later years of David's reign. (*a*) The language of *v.* 1, "*again* the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel" evidently refers to the famine recorded in ch. xxi. and points to a date after that occurrence. (*b*) It would have been impossible for the commander-in-chief to spend nearly ten months in taking the census, except at a time of permanent peace. (*c*) David's preparations for building the Temple, which occupied the last years of his reign, are narrated in Chronicles as the immediate sequel of his purchase of Araunah's threshing-floor.

The corresponding narrative in Chronicles agrees much less closely than usual with Samuel. Either its writer drew from other sources, or the compiler of Samuel has omitted much of the original account.

For a discussion of the nature of David's sin see Additional Note v. p. 238.

1—9. The Numbering of the People.

1. *again*] The previous manifestation of God's anger referred to was the famine (ch. xxi.). It is possible that the two narratives stood in close juxtaposition in the original document used by the compiler.

and he moved David against them] The subject of the verb is Jehovah. The nation had sinned and incurred His anger, and He instigated David to an act which brought down a sharp punishment on the nation. The statement that God incited David to do what was afterwards condemned and punished as a heinous sin cannot of course mean that He *compelled* David to sin, but that in order to test and prove his character He allowed the temptation to assault him. Thus while we read that "God himself tempteth no man" (James i. 13), we are taught to pray "Bring us not into temptation" (Matt. vi. 13). In 1 Chr. xxi. 1 we read "Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." The older record speaks only of God's permissive action: the later tells us of the malicious instrumentality of Satan. The case is like that of Job (Job i. 12, ii. 10).

2 number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the
captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through
all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and
number ye the people, that I may know the number of the
3 people. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy
God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an
hundredfold, and *that* the eyes of my lord the king may see
it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?
4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and
against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains
of the host went out from the presence of the king, to num-
5 ber the people *of* Israel. And they passed over Jordan, and

Go, number] **Go, count**; a different word from that translated *number* in the rest of the chapter, for the meaning of which see note on ch. xviii. 1.

Israel and Judah] The designation of the people as Israel and Judah seems to have been in use even before the Division of the Kingdoms. In the next verse *Israel* includes the whole nation. See Introd. p. 13.

2. *For the king said*] **And the king said**: yielding to the temptation to which he was subjected by permission of God through the instrumentality of Satan.

the host] The word for *host* in *vv.* 2, 4 is different from that generally used of the Israelite army, and perhaps indicates that this chapter was derived from a different source.

number ye] It is stated in 1 Chron. xxi. 2 that the commission was given to "Joab and to the captains (or princes) of the people." Their cooperation is here implied by the use of the plural, and by *v.* 4. They were associated with Joab in the work, just as the princes of the tribes were associated with Moses and Aaron in taking the census (Num. i. 4 ff.), and this indicates that the census had some military object in view.

3. *the* LORD *thy God add*, &c.] Cp. Deut. i. 11.

and that the eyes, &c.] That is, may it happen in the king's lifetime.

why doth my lord, &c.] "Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" is the further explanation of Joab's thoughts given in 1 Chr. xxi. 3. It is probable that a shrewd practical man like Joab, whose life shews no signs of being influenced by religious motives, opposed the king's purpose more from the fear of exciting disaffection among the people by a scheme to increase the burdens of military service, than from a sense that the king's spirit was displeasing to God, though the latter motive may not have been altogether absent.

4. *against Joab, and against the captains of the host*] A council of the officers of the army was held, in which the scheme was discussed.

pitched in Aroer, *on* the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer: then they 6
came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and

5. *in Aroer*] This Aroer is generally thought to be Aroer near Rabbah in the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 25): but since it is natural to suppose that the census began from the southern boundary of the Trans-Jordanic territory, which was the river Arnon, and since **the city that is in the midst of the ravine** is repeatedly mentioned in connexion with Aroer upon the Arnon (Deut. ii. 36; Josh. xiii. 9, 16; cp. Josh. xii. 2) in describing the southern boundary of the tribe of Reuben, it seems far better to understand Aroer to be the Aroer on the Arnon.

The site of Aroer on the Arnon is marked by the ruins of *Ara'ar* on the northern edge of the *Wady Mojeb*. This deep gorge in the level plateau is **the ravine** (E. V. *river*) **of the Arnon**. The latest explorer of Moab says: "Above the Roman bridge are some faint remains of early buildings; perhaps 'the city that is in the midst of the river.' At least it is scarcely possible that such exuberant vegetation, with perennial moisture, should have remained unappropriated in the time of Israel's greatness; and whether the place so vaguely spoken of were above or below the fords;—'cities' or villages there were sure to be in the midst of the 'river' or *wady*." Tristram's *Land of Moab*, p. 128.

on the right side] On the south, for the Hebrews reckoned the points of the compass facing the east.

of Gad] If the view taken above with regard to Aroer is correct, *of Gad* must be separated from *the river*, and rendered **towards Gad.** Probably some such words as *and they came* have dropped out, as the preposition *towards* before *Jazer* requires a verb of motion. Indeed there are good reasons for supposing that the Heb. text is corrupt, and that we should read with some MSS. of the Sept.: "And they began from Aroer, and from the city which is in the midst of the ravine; and they came to Gad and towards Jazer."

Jazer] Or Jaazer, a city captured by Israel from the Amorites (Num. xxi. 32), rebuilt by the tribe of Gad (Num. xxxii. 35; Josh. xiii. 25), allotted to the Levites (Josh. xxi. 39), subsequently Moabite (Is. xvi. 8, 9), and recaptured by Judas Maccabaeus from the Ammonites (1 Macc. v. 6). Its site is probably to be placed at *es Szîr*, 7 miles W.S.W. of *Ammân* (Rabbah) and 9 miles N. of Heshbon.

6. *Gilead*] The mountainous district partly to the north and partly to the south of the River Jabbok.

the land of Tahtim-hodshi] No such district is known, and the form of the words also makes it probable that the text is corrupt. Some conjecture that we should read (with some MSS. of the Sept.) *to the land of the Hittites to Kedesh*, the famous Hittite capital on the Orontes, but this seems too far north; others conjecture *the regions below mount Hermon;* and so forth. All that can be said is that some district, apparently east of the Jordan and north of Gilead, is meant.

7 they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon, and came *to*
the strong hold of Tyre, and *to* all the cities of the Hivites,
and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of
8 Judah, *even to* Beer-sheba. So when they had gone through
all the land, they came *to* Jerusalem at the end of nine
9 months and twenty days. And Joab gave *up* the sum of the
number of the people unto the king: and there were in
Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the
sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand
men.

Dan-jaan] Perhaps the well known Dan, but if so, it is strange that it should here and nowhere else be distinguished as *Dan-jaan*. The meaning of *jaan* is uncertain, and perhaps we should follow the Sept. (A) and Vulg. in reading *Dan-jaar*, i.e. Dan in the forest.

and about to Zidon] Shaping their course westward to the famous city of Zidon, the extreme north-western limit of the kingdom, on the border of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), but never occupied by that tribe (Jud. i. 31). Zidon was anciently the most important city of Phoenicia, and hence the Phoenicians are generally called Zidonians in the O. T. (Josh. xiii. 6; Jud. xviii. 7; 1 Kings v. 6); but at this time it was inferior and probably subject to Tyre.

7. *the strong hold of Tyre*] The same term—generally rendered *fenced city* in the E. V.—is applied to Tyre in Josh. xix. 29, where Tyre is named among the places on the border of Asher. Like Zidon it was never occupied by the Israelites, and we must suppose either that the region traversed by the enumerators is defined as reaching up to though not including Tyre and Zidon, or that these cities were actually visited in order to take a census of Israelites resident in them.

the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites] The old inhabitants were never exterminated from the northern part of Palestine, but made tributary, and apparently allowed to dwell in communities of their own. The district round Kedesh-Naphtali in particular was called *the region of the nations* or *Galilee of the Gentiles* (Josh. xx. 7; 1 Kings ix. 11; Is. ix. 1). The Hivites dwelt principally in this northern region (Josh. xi. 3; Jud. iii. 3), and also round Gibeon (Josh. xi. 19), and are probably specified as the tribe of which most survived: the Canaanites would include all the other native tribes in general.

8. *through all the land*] Joab however omitted the Levites, in accordance with the direction given to Moses (Num. i. 47 ff.), because they were exempt from military service; and the Benjamites, possibly in order to avoid exciting disaffection in a tribe specially ready to take offence.

9. *eight hundred thousand...five hundred thousand*] In 1 Chr. xxi. 5 the numbers are given as 1,100,000 for Israel, and 470,000 for Judah. This discrepancy may be due to textual corruption, but more probably arises from a difference in the original estimates, or in the oral tradition

10—14. *The choice of punishments.*

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly *in* that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the

10 11 12

with respect to them, since the result of the census was not authoritatively registered in the state records (1 Chr. xxvii. 24). The conjecture that the standing army of 288,000 men (1 Chr. xxvii. 1—15) is here deducted from Israel, and some body of 30,000 troops added to Judah, is ingenious, but rendered improbable by the fact that it is necessary to add to the one and subtract from the other to make the totals equal to those of 1 Chron.

The numbers have been attacked as exaggerated, and far exceeding the possible capacity of the country. The numbers given imply a total population of five or six millions at least, and the area of the country is estimated at about 11,000 square miles. This gives (making allowance for the excepted tribes) between 500 and 600 to the square mile, a high but not impossible rate of population when the extreme fertility of the country in ancient times is taken into consideration. The ruins with which Palestine is covered in every direction prove that the population was exceptionally dense. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Census*.

10—14. THE CHOICE OF PUNISHMENTS.

10. *David's heart smote him*] Conscience accused him, and he became aware of his guilt. He recognised the sinfulness of the proud and vainglorious spirit of self-confidence and desire for worldly aggrandisement which had induced him to take the census. See Additional Note v. p. 238.

I have done very foolishly] Cp. 1 Sam. xiii. 13; 2 Chr. xvi. 9. In both these cases, as in effect here, the folly was sin springing from distrust of God.

11. *For when David was up in the morning*] **And David arose in the morning, and**, &c.: after the recognition and confession of his sin. The E.V. gives the false impression that the conviction of his sin was the result of Gad's visit, which is not the meaning of the passage. Gad was not sent until after his confession and prayer for pardon.

the prophet Gad, David's seer] Gad has not been mentioned since he was with David in his wanderings (1 Sam. xxii. 5), but no doubt had been acting as his confidential counsellor throughout. The word for "seer" is *chôzeh*, literally "gazer," a term first used here in place of the older word "seer," *rôeh*. See note on 1 Sam. ix. 9. The narrative before us was not improbably written by Gad himself (1 Chr. xxix. 29).

LORD, I offer thee three *things;* choose thee one of them,
13 that I may do *it* unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see
14 what answer I shall return *to* him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15—17. *The Plague.*

15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people

13. *seven years of famine*] The reading of the Sept. and Chron. is **three years,** and this is unquestionably to be preferred, as required by the symmetry of the statement. Famine, war, and pestilence are three of Jehovah's four sore judgments (Ezek. xiv. 21). Two of them David had already experienced. Note the expanded form in which Gad's speech is given in 1 Chr. xxi. 12, especially the representation of the pestilence as "the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel."

advise] Lit. *know* or *consider*. *Advise*, like *advise thyself* in 1 Chr. xxi. 12 means *reflect* or *consider* So Milton, *Par. Lost*, II. 376:

> Advise, if this be worth
> Attempting.

14. *his mercies are great*] Cp. Ps. li. 1; and the reference to this passage in Ecclus. ii. 17, 18: "They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men: for as his majesty is, so is his mercy."

The Sept. adds at the close of the verse: "And David chose him the pestilence (lit. *death*). And it was the days of wheat harvest." War would place the nation at the mercy of its enemies: famine would make it dependent on corn-merchants, who might greatly aggravate the miseries of scarcity: only in the pestilence—some form of plague sudden and mysterious in its attack, and baffling the medical knowledge of the time—would the punishment come directly from God, and depend immediately upon His Will.

15—17. THE PLAGUE.

15. *even to the time appointed*] The meaning of these words, which are not found in Chron., is very doubtful. (1) The E.V. follows the Vulg. *usque ad tempus constitutum.* This would naturally mean until

from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.
And when the angel stretched out his hand *upon* Jerusa- 16
lem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and
said to the angel that destroyed the people, *It is* enough:
stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by
the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite. And David 17

the end of the third day; but the duration of the plague seems to have been mercifully shortened (*v.* 16). Perhaps *a time appointed* (there is no definite article) might mean a time determined in the counsel of God, before the expiration of the period originally named. (2) Most commentators render **until the time of assembly**, i.e. the hour for offering the evening sacrifice, about three o'clock in the afternoon. Cp. 1 Kings xviii. 29, 36; Dan. ix. 21; Acts iii. 1. This is supported by the explanation given in the Targum: "from the time of the slaying of the perpetual sacrifice until it is burned;" and by Jerome (*Quaest. Hebr. in libros Regum*): "By *the time appointed* is meant that at which the evening sacrifice was offered." (3) The Sept. rendering, *until the time of breakfast*, i.e. noon, is improbable.

16. *the angel*] Angels are God's ministers in temporal judgment now, as well as in the final judgment hereafter. Cp. Ex. xii. 23; Ps. lxxviii. 49; 2 Kings xix. 35; Acts xii. 23; Matt. xiii. 41.

the LORD *repented him of the evil*] Cp. Ex. xxxii. 14; Jer. xxvi. 13, 19; Jon. iii. 10. On the one hand Scripture teaches us that "God is not a man that he should repent" (Num. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29); on the other hand it does not shrink from saying that God repents (*a*) when, as here, upon man's penitence He withdraws or mitigates a punishment: (*b*) when, upon man's faithlessness or disobedience, He cancels a promise or revokes a blessing which He had given. God's repentance does not mean that He who foreknows all things *regrets* His action, nor is it a sign of mutability. Scripture boldly states the two apparently contradictory truths, and leaves conscience to harmonize them. See notes on 1 Sam. xv. 11, 29.

the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite] **The threshingfloor**: precisely the same word as in *vv.* 18, 21, 24. Threshingfloors were constructed on eminences, to catch the wind for winnowing the grain. Araunah's threshingfloor was on Mount Moriah, the hill to the eastward of Jerusalem, and was the site upon which the Temple was afterwards built (2 Chr. iii. 1). See Additional Note VI. p. 240. This Mount Moriah was identified by Jewish tradition (e.g. Josephus *Ant.* VII. 13. 4) with the mountain in the land of Moriah which was the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2 ff.), but the identification has been questioned. See *Sinai and Pal.* p. 251.

It has been supposed by some that the sacred rock of the Moslems, which is the highest point of the Temple hill, and is now covered by the *Kubbet es Sakhrah* or "Dome of the Rock," marks the actual site of Araunah's threshing-floor. See *Sinai and Pal.* p. 178 ff.

Araunah] The name is variously spelt Aravnah (*v.* 16 *Qrî*), Avar-

spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18—25. *Purchase of Araunah's threshingfloor and erection of an altar there.*

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him,

nah (*v.* 16 *Kthîbh*), Aranyah (*v.* 18 *Kthîbh*); in Chron. it is written Ornan; and in the Sept. in both books Ὄρνα (*Orna*). This variety of form is probably due to different attempts to represent a non-Hebraic name. There is no ground for the popular belief (based on a misunderstanding of *v.* 23) that Araunah was the old king of Jebus before its conquest by David, and had been permitted by David to reside on his estate just outside Jerusalem. But his presence there is an evidence that the old inhabitants had been allowed to remain, and even to retain their property. Cp. 1 Kings ix. 20.

17. *when he saw the angel*] The writer of Chronicles, dwelling upon the details of the miraculous circumstances which attended the designation of the site of the Temple, records that "David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. And David and the elders, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces" (xxi. 16).

I have sinned, and I have done wickedly] **It is I that have sinned and I that have done perversely.** The pronoun is twice emphatically expressed. Sin is doubly described as *missing an aim*, coming short of the mark of duty; and as *crooked* or perverse action, following the leadings of self-will instead of the straightforward path of right. Cp. 1 Kings viii. 47; Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

these sheep, what have they done] Cp. ch. vii. 8; Ps. lxxiv. 1; xcv. 7. David takes all the blame upon himself, for his offence had been the immediate cause of the plague, and it is characteristic of true penitence to dwell exclusively on its own sin, without respect to the complicity of others. But it is clear from *v.* 1 that the sin was the sin of the people as well as of David. See Additional Note v. p. 238.

18—25. PURCHASE OF ARAUNAH'S THRESHINGFLOOR AND ERECTION OF AN ALTAR THERE.

18. *Gad came*] By direction of the angel, according to 1 Chr. xxi. 18. Gad's message was the answer to David's prayer, the announcement to him of the purpose of mercy described in *v.* 16. David was still in Jerusalem, praying perhaps at the tent in which the Ark was, when he saw the appearance of the angel hovering above the neighbouring hill, and apparently about to strike the city.

Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to 19
the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. And 20
Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king *on* his face upon the ground. And Araunah 21
said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let 22
my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood. All 23
these things did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept

20. *saw the king*] In Chron. *saw the angel*, but the words *angel* and *king* in Heb. are very similar, and probably *king* is the true reading there also.

went out] From the threshingfloor where he was at work threshing wheat.

22. *threshing instruments*] **The threshing sledges**, drawn by the oxen which Araunah offers for sacrifice. For a description of this implement see note on ch. xii. 31. The word there is different, and that used here is found only in 1 Chr. xxi. 23 and Is. xli. 15. Corn was either trampled out by oxen (Deut. xxv. 4), or beaten out by these machines. See Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. *Agriculture*.

other *instruments of the oxen*] Omit *other*. **The instruments of the oxen** were the wooden yokes. Cp. 1 Kings xix. 21; 1 Sam. vi. 14. Chron. adds, "and the wheat for the meat offering."

23. *All these things*, &c.] Render, **The whole doth Araunah, O king, give unto the king.** The words are a continuation of Araunah's speech in *v.* 22. Cp. 1 Chr. xxi. 23. Although the rendering, "the whole did king Araunah give unto the king," is grammatically possible, it is inconceivable that so important a fact as that Araunah was the former king of Jebus should be only mentioned in so incidental a way, and the striking picture drawn by Dean Stanley (*Lect.* II. 111) of the meeting of the two princes—"the fallen king of the ancient fortress, the new king of the restored capital, each moved alike by the misfortune of a city which in different senses belonged to each"—must be given up as destitute of historical foundation. But the word *O king* is not found in the Sept. or Vulg., and should probably be omitted. In this case the words will be the narrator's summary of Araunah's offer: "the whole did Araunah give unto the king:" *give*, as in the strikingly similar offer of Ephron to Abraham, meaning *offer*. See Gen. xxiii. 11.

24 thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the
25 oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

accept thee] The same word is used of God's acceptance of prayer and sacrifice in Job xxxiii. 26 (E. V. *be favourable*); Ezek. xx. 40, 41, xliii. 27, &c.

24. *neither will I offer...of that which doth cost me nothing*] For that would contradict the essential idea of sacrifice. "It is an heartless piety of those base-minded Christians that care only to serve God good cheap." *Bp. Hall.* Cp. Mal. i. 13, 14.

David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver] The corresponding statement in 1 Chr. xxi. 25 is that "David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight." If this refers to the same purchase, we can only suppose that the numbers in one or both of the passages are corrupt: but it is possible that the immediate purchase of the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver was a distinct transaction from the subsequent purchase of "the place," that is, the whole area upon which the Temple was erected, for six hundred shekels of gold.

25. *burnt offerings and peace offerings*] The Sept. adds; "And Solomon added to the altar afterwards, for it was small at the first:" and this, whether merely a gloss or part of the original text, agrees with the statement in Chronicles, that David chose the spot for the site of the Temple. See 1 Chron. xxii. 1; 2 Chr. iii. 1.

So the LORD *was intreated for the land*] See note on ch. xxi. 14.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

The Messianic Interpretation of Nathan's Prophecy to David in Chap. vii.

This prophecy marks an important stage in the Old Testament revelation which prepared the way for the Messiah's coming. The primeval promise to Adam held out the hope of deliverance through "the seed of the woman[1]:" Abraham received the assurance that "in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed[2];" Jacob in his dying blessing assigned the sceptre to Judah[3]. Thus the whole human race, one nation of the race, and one tribe of the nation, were successively designated to be the means of realising the promise of blessing to mankind. And now by this prophetic declaration a further limitation was made, and the family of David was chosen out of the tribe of Judah as the depositary of the promise.

At this epoch of the national history, Israel's hopes centred in the theocratic kingdom, in the establishment of a government whose head was to be the visible representative of Jehovah. And now by God's message through Nathan this kingdom was for ever promised to the house of David. To it therefore men's hopes were now directed as the destined instrument of salvation.

But this prophecy does not speak of the Messiah as an individual; it does not predict the perfect reign of a sinless king. It contemplates a succession of kings of David's line, who would be liable to fall into sin and would need the discipline of chastisement. The perfect king in whom, as we now know, the line was to culminate, and the prophecy receive its highest fulfilment, is not yet foreshadowed.

It remained for prophet and psalmist, developing this fundamental revelation, to draw the picture of the ideal king who should spring from David's seed, and exercise dominion as the true representative of Jehovah on earth. As each human heir of David's line failed to fulfil

[1] Gen. iii. 15. [2] Gen. xxii. 18.
[3] Gen. xlix. 10. Cp. 1 Chron. xxviii. 4.

the expectation, hope was carried forward and elevated, until He came to Whom is given the throne of His father David, and of Whose kingdom there shall be no end[1].

The subsequent references to this great promise should be carefully studied.

(*a*) David applies it to Solomon. 1 Chr. xxii. 9, 10, xxviii. 2 ff.

(*b*) Solomon claims it for himself. 1 Kings v. 5; 2 Chr. vi. 7 ff.; 1 Kings viii. 17—20.

(*c*) It is confirmed to Solomon. 1 Kings ix. 4, 5.

(*d*) It is repeatedly affirmed, that in spite of the sin of individual kings, the kingdom shall not be withdrawn from David's house for his sake. 1 Kings xi. 31—39, xv. 4, 5; 2 Kings viii. 18, 19.

(*e*) Ps. lxxxix., written no doubt in the dark days when the monarchy was already tottering to its fall, recapitulates this promise, and pleads with God that He should not suffer it to be frustrated. See especially *vv.* 19—37. Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12, and Is. lv. 3, also contain distinct references to it.

NOTE II.

On the execution of Saul's sons.

The narrative of the famine for Saul's sin, and the consequent surrender of his sons to the Gibeonites for execution calls for some comment beyond the compass of an ordinary note. Both punishments seem to fall on the heads of those who were not personally guilty.

1. The nation was punished for the sin of its ruler committed many years before. With regard to this, Waterland[2] justly observes: "It ought not to be said, because it cannot be proved, that the Israelites of that time were punished for crimes that they were in no way guilty of. We know not how many, or who, were confederate with Saul in murdering the Gibeonites, or guilty in not hindering it. We know not how many, or who, made the crime their own by approving it afterwards." Further it must be remembered that the king was the representative of the people. The sins of an individual member of a community must necessarily in many instances be regarded as implicating the whole community, until they are detected and repudiated[3]. Much more then must the sins of the national representative involve the whole nation in their consequences.

The fact that the punishment did not come until years after the sin was committed is "a recognition of the continuance of a nation's life, of its obligations and its sins from age to age. All national morality, nay the meaning and possibility of history, depends upon this truth[4]."

[1] Luke i. 32, 33.

[2] *Scripture Vindicated: Works*, IV. 269.

[3] See for example the law of murder (Deut. xxi. 1—9): the case of Achan (Josh. vii. 1 ff.).

[4] Maurice's *Prophets and Kings*, p. 69.

2. Saul's sons, who were not charged with being in any way personally accessory to their father's crime, were put to death to expiate it. The sins of the father were visited upon the children. Now, as Ezekiel clearly teaches, no innocent man can be regarded as justly punishable for another's sin[1]: but in those early ages the family was regarded as an unit, and the sins of the head of the family were regarded as involving all its members in their consequences. The sense of the rights and the responsibilities of each individual was as yet undeveloped. Consequently, as seen by the people, the execution of Saul's sons was a *judicial* act of retribution; but this aspect of the transaction was only an "accommodation" to the current ideas of the age. Viewed in its essential character as sanctioned by God, it was a *didactic* act, designed to teach the guilt of sin.

God has an absolute power of life and death over His creatures, and may at any time take away the life which He has given. "The extermination of the Canaanites, and the destruction of the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of Achan, and of Saul, were great lessons, and lessons which the great Master could give by the simple exercise of His right as the Lord of human life.... They were *real* acts, and expressed the real mind of the Deity, only as acts of instruction. God cannot punish a man for the reason of another's sin; but it is open to God to inflict death upon His creatures, *without* a reason, if it so pleases Him; and of course for a reason if it be a good one:—in order to strike wholesome terror, in order to keep a standing memento, in order to associate sin with a spectacle of horror and destruction[2]."

3. The act was no doubt one which would not have been sanctioned in a more enlightened age; but the supposition that "David seized this opportunity to rid himself of seven possible claimants to the throne" (Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, III. 1133) is a baseless calumny, sufficiently refuted by his care for Mephibosheth, and by the obscurity of the victims; and the idea that he may have been, for a while at least, "infected by the baneful example of the Phœnicians" in offering human sacrifices, is contradicted by all that we know of his character. The omission of this incident in 1 Chronicles is quite in accordance with the plan of that work, and need not be explained by assuming that when that book was written it had come to be regarded as a barbarous act of superstition, too horrible to be retained in the history. See Introd., ch. III. p. 22.

NOTE III.

2 Samuel xxii. and Psalm xviii.

The variations between the two texts of this Psalm in the Book of Samuel and in the Psalter present a critical problem of great interest

[1] Ezek. xviii. 2—4, 19, 20.

[2] Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, Lect. v. The whole lecture deserves careful study as bearing upon the question.

and importance in its bearing on the integrity of the text of the O.T. Two questions obviously arise: (1) How are the variations to be accounted for: and (2) which text is to be preferred as nearest to the original.

1. It has been maintained by some critics that both recensions proceeded from the author, and are equally authentic. That in Samuel is supposed to be the original form: that in the Psalter is supposed to be a revision prepared by David himself, probably towards the close of his life, for public recitation.

This is a conjecture which can neither be proved nor disproved: but while many of the variations are certainly intentional, and due to the hand of a reviser, many are as certainly due to accidental errors of transcription.

The confusion of similar letters[1]: the omission and repetition of clauses[2]: the transposition of words[3]: are phenomena familiar to the student of the MSS. of the N.T.; and both texts have suffered to some extent from these causes.

2. Those who reject the hypothesis that both recensions proceeded from David's own pen, are not agreed which is nearest to the original. The text in the Psalter appears to present the more polished literary form: that in Samuel is marked by several roughnesses of language and expression.

Some reserve is necessary in expressing an opinion on the question: but the present editor is inclined to believe that the text in 2 Samuel, although in many respects defective, is as a whole the better representative of the original form: and that the text in the Psalter has been subjected to a careful revision at a later date, in which peculiar forms, which perhaps were "licenses of popular usage," have been replaced by classical forms; unusual constructions simplified; archaisms and obscure expressions explained.

The existing Hebrew text of the O.T. is so commonly regarded as free from errors that it may be worth while to note the following conclusions which seem to follow from a comparison of the two texts.

(1) That in all probability there was a period before the final close of the Canon when the letter of the text was not regarded with the same reverence as in a later age, and the scribes considered revision and alteration allowable.

(2) That it is certain that there was a long period in the history of the text of the O.T., during which it was not copied with the scrupulous accuracy which characterized the later Jewish scribes, and consequently errors of transcription crept in, as in the case of the N.T.

(3) That nevertheless the extent of the possible alteration or corruption of the text of the O.T. must not be exaggerated. In spite of considerable variations in detail, the general sense and spirit of the Psalm remain the same in the two recensions: and so, although the present "received text" of the O.T. may vary considerably in detail from the original autographs, it still preserves the substantial sense.

[1] See notes on *vv.* 11, 42, 43. [2] See *vv.* 13, 14. [3] See *vv.* 5, 6.

NOTE IV.

The Targum of 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7.

A translation of the Targum of Jonathan, or Aramaic Paraphrase of David's Last Words, is here given as a specimen of ancient Jewish exegesis, specially interesting because it interprets the passage as a direct prophecy of the Messiah. It is right to remark that it is only in poetical passages that the Targum adds so largely to the original. For the most part it is a baldly literal translation.

1. And these are the words of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied concerning the end of the age[1], concerning the days of consolation[2] which are to come. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was exalted to the kingdom said, the anointed by the Word of the God of Jacob, and chief in presiding over the sweetness of the praises of Israel:

2. David said, By the spirit of prophecy of Jehovah I speak these things, and His holy words do I order in my mouth:

3. David said, The God of Israel spake concerning me, the Strong One of Israel who ruleth over the sons of men, judging in truth, said that he would appoint for me a king, who is the Messiah, who shall arise and rule in the fear of Jehovah.

4. Blessed are ye righteous who have wrought for yourselves good deeds, for ye shall shine as the light of His glory, as the brightness of the dawn which cometh forth in its strength, and like the sun which shall shine as the brightness of his glory, three hundred and forty-three fold[3], as the light of seven stars for seven days. More than this shall ye be magnified and prospered, who have been desiring the years of consolation that are coming, like the husbandman who waiteth in the years of drought for the rain to descend upon the earth.

5. David said, More than this is my house before God, for He hath sworn an eternal oath unto me, that my kingdom should be established as the orders of Creation are established, and should be preserved for the age which is to come; for all my needs and all my petitions are set before Him: therefore no kingdom shall be established against it any more.

6. But wicked sinners are like thorns, which, when they spring up, are soft to pluck up, but when a man spareth them, and leaveth them alone, they grow and wax strong until it is impossible to approach them with the hand.

7. So likewise if any man beginneth to approach unto trespasses, they grow and wax strong over him, until they cover him like a garment of iron, against which men cannot prevail with shafts of spears and lances. Therefore vengeance on them is not in the power of man, but with fire shall they be utterly consumed when the court of the great judgment shall be revealed and sit on the seat of judgment to judge the world.

[1] Cp. Mt. xiii. 39, 40. [2] Cp. Lk. ii. 25.
[3] The cube of the perfect number seven.

NOTE V.

The numbering of the people.

What were David's motives for taking the census, and why was the act sinful? An ordinary census was perfectly legitimate; it was expressly provided for by the Mosaic law[1]; and upon three occasions at least a census of the people was taken by Moses without offence[2]. It was not then the census itself which was displeasing to God, but the motive which inspired David to take it. Various conjectures have been suggested to account for David's wish to number the people. Some suppose that he intended to develope the military power of the nation with a view to foreign conquest; others that he meditated the organization of an imperial despotism and the imposition of fresh taxes. The military character of the whole proceeding, which was discussed in a council of officers[3] and carried out under Joab's superintendence, makes it probable that it was connected with some plan for increasing the effective army, possibly with a view to foreign conquests. But whether any definite design of increased armaments or heavier taxation lay behind it or not, it seems clear that what constituted the sin of the act was the vainglorious spirit which prompted it. In a moment of pride and ambition —pride at the prosperity of the kingdom, ambition to be like the kings of the nations round about,—he desired to know to the full over how vast and populous a kingdom he ruled, forgetting that the strength of Israel consisted not in the number of its people, but in the protecting care of God. This view is strongly corroborated by Joab's expostulation, "The LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing[4]?" It was a momentary apostasy from Jehovah; an oblivion of that spirit of dependence which was the duty and the glory of the kings of Israel; the sin denounced by Jeremiah when he said: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah[5]."

The sin was not confined to David: it had infected the nation. It is expressly said that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled *against Israel*[6]." It may be that now, on the very threshold of their national existence, they were tempted by visions of worldly glory to forget that Israel was not to realise its vocation to the world in the guise of a conquering secular state, but as Jehovah's witness among the nations. If so, if pride was alienating the heart of king and people from their allegiance to Jehovah, a prompt chastisement was the truest mercy.

But it was needful for an external, visible, manifestation of the sin to precede the judgment, in order to justify the ways of God to men. The

[1] Ex. xxx. 12 ff.
[2] See Ex. xxxviii. 26; Num. i. 2, 3; Num. xxvi. 1 ff.
[3] 2 Sam. xxiv. 4
[4] 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.
[5] Jer. xvii. 5.
[6] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

temptation was presented to David; he fell, and in his fall represented truly and faithfully the fall of the nation. The nation was not punished vicariously for its ruler's sin, but for a sin which was its own, and was only embodied and made visible by its ruler's act. And the punishment struck the very point of their pride, by diminishing the numbers which had been the ground of their self-confident elation. The Jewish tradition[1] that the sin consisted in the omission to pay the atonement money prescribed on the occasion of a census[2], has a certain truth underlying it. That ordinance was designed to teach the people that they were not their own, but Jehovah's; and though there is no ground for supposing that the letter of the regulation was neglected, the spirit of it seems to have been forgotten.

NOTE VI.

The Topography of Jerusalem.

The topography of Jerusalem is a much-disputed problem. The data of the O. T., the Apocrypha, and Josephus are extremely difficult to reconcile, and the changes which the natural features of the site have undergone in the course of centuries by the levelling of heights and filling up of valleys, make a satisfactory determination of the sites almost hopeless.

The places mentioned in the Second Book of Samuel are (*a*) Zion or the City of David: (*b*) the threshing-floor of Araunah, on which the Temple was afterwards built: (*c*) the Millo.

The natural features of the site of Jerusalem are briefly as follows. The plateau on which the city stands is enclosed on three sides by deep ravines: on the East by the Valley of the Kidron, dividing the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives: on the West and South by the Valley of Hinnom. It was originally divided by another valley, called by Josephus the Tyropœon Valley, now in great part filled up with debris, which extended northwards from a point near the junction of the Valley of Hinnom with the Kidron, and separated into two branches one running west, the other north-west. "The ancient site thus consisted of three principal hills, to east, north-west, and south-west, separated by deep valleys[3]."

i. All authorities agree in placing the Temple on the eastern hill[4], but where Zion should be fixed is a question hotly disputed.

(1) Since the fourth century it has been generally supposed that Zion or the City of David (for the two are clearly identified in 2 Sam. v. 7—9) occupied the south-western hill, and was identical with what

[1] Jos. *Ant.* VII. 13. 1. "But when David desired to know the number of the people, he forgot the commandment of Moses, who enjoined that if the people were numbered half a shekel should be offered to God for each person."

[2] Ex. XXX. 12.

[3] Warren's *Temple or Tomb*, p. 33.

[4] Marked 3 in the map of the Environs of Jerusalem.

Josephus calls the Upper City[1]." This view is maintained by Lieut. Conder, who says[2]: "The southern, higher, and larger hill must be the Upper City, the "Mountain Fort" of Zion: the knoll north of it is Akra, the site of the lower city[3]."

(2) Captain Warren, whose excavations for the Palestine Exploration Fund have brought to light much valuable information, places Zion on the north-western hill, where stood the "Lower City" or "Akra" of Josephus. The hill was originally considerably higher, but was cut down by Simon Maccabeus, when he took it from the Macedonians, because it commanded the Temple, and had afforded the enemy a post of vantage from which to annoy the Jews as they went to the Temple[4].

(3) Mr Fergusson (in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 1026) maintains that the evidence of the O. T. distinctly leads to the identification of Zion with the eastern hill, on which the Temple stood. Zion, he says, is constantly spoken of as in some way distinct from Jerusalem[5]: it is spoken of as a Holy Place in terms such as are never applied to Jerusalem, but are easily intelligible if Zion was the hill upon which the Temple stood. Thus it is called "the hill of the LORD;" "the holy hill; "the dwelling-place of Jehovah[6]." And in the First Book of Maccabees the name Mount Sion is unquestionably applied to the hill upon which the Temple stood. For example, we read: "Then said Judas and his brethren:...let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the Sanctuary. Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into Mount Sion. And when they saw the Sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned...they rent their clothes[7]." According to this view the fortress captured by David occupied the northern part of the ridge, on which the Temple was afterwards built.

None of these theories is free from serious difficulties, and a discussion of the arguments would exceed the limits of our space. The following points may however be noticed.

(*a*) The site of the Temple was outside the limits of the City of David. This is clear from the statement in 1 Kings viii. 1, that the Ark was brought up to the Temple out of the City of David; and from the fact that Araunah's threshing floor cannot have been inside the walls, but must have been on the bare unoccupied hill outside.

(*b*) The sanctity of Zion may be accounted for by the fact that it was for many years the resting-place of the Ark, and was celebrated as such by David in his Psalms. The name of Zion thus became the title for Jerusalem in its quality of a holy city, and on the Return from the Captivity the name may have been applied to the most sacred part of it, the Temple Mount, although this was not the original Zion.

ii. The Temple undoubtedly stood on the eastern hill, called, in one passage only, Mount Moriah (2 Chr. iii. 1), where the threshingfloor of

[1] Marked 1 in the map.
[2] *Tent Work in Palestine*, 1. 366.
[3] Marked 2 in the map.
[4] Jos. *Ant.* XIII. 6. 6.
[5] 2 Kings xix. 31; Ps. li. 18; Is. xxx. 19.
[6] See Ps. ii. 6, ix. 11, xxiv. 3, cxxxii. 13, &c.
[7] 1 Macc. iv. 36—38. Cp. 1 Macc. iv. 60, vii. 33.

Araunah had previously been. The top of this hill has been artificially levelled, and its sides sustained by immense walls. On the platform thus constructed the Temple stood, but whether in the centre as Captain Warren maintains, or at the south-west angle, as Mr Fergusson supposes, is a disputed question, on which it is not necessary to enter here.

iii. The Millo—the word always has the definite article—appears to have been some important fortification already in existence. It may have protected the city on the north, the only side on which it had not the defence of precipitous ravines. Solomon rebuilt it (1 Kings ix. 15, 24, xi. 27), and Hezekiah repaired it as a defence against the Assyrians (2 Chr. xxxii. 5). Millo may have been an old Canaanite name: the only other place in which it occurs is in connexion with the ancient Canaanite city of Shechem (Jud. ix. 6, 20). The Sept. renders Millo by ἡ ἄκρα "the citadel" (except in 2 Chr.), and this is the term constantly used in the books of Maccabees for the fortress which was occupied by the Macedonians, and at last captured and razed by Simon Maccabæus.

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